Hafa Adai!

Last day to submit PUA applications is Monday, Oct. 4. PAGE 3

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 192

www.saipantribune.com TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 2021 www.facebook.com/saipantribune

9 firefighters' lawsuit dismissed

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The Superior Court dismissed yesterday the lawsuit filed by nine firefighters who were terminated from their jobs for refusing to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho granted yesterday the agreement between the nine firefighters, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, and DFEMS Commissioner Dennis Mendiola to dismiss the case without prejudice.

Dismissing a case without prejudice means the plaintiffs can re-file their suit with the court if they choose.

According to the agreement among the parties, the court should dismiss the case without prejudice because the court has found that it has no jurisdiction over the case and because the court has denied the preliminary injunction requested by the nine firefighters.

"Because the court found it had no jurisdiction, the par-

See LAWSUIT on Page 4

Torres' utility billings 'appear excessive'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Gary P. Camacho described in his testimony before the House of Representatives Judiciary

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'KICKOFF CEREMONY' JOSHUA SANTOS

Northern Marianas Technical Institute interim chief executive officer Jodina Attao, bottom row rightmost, holds up the signed memorandum of agreement between NMTI and the Department of Corrections, making official a pilot program that would allow inmates to take trades courses through NMTI. From left, also pictured is Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, top row first and second, and NMTI board chairman Mario Valentino and DOC commissioner Wally Villagomez, bottom row first and second.

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1 positive case; Pfizer booster shot approved

» 8 COVID-related deaths in Guam

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

One more incoming traveler has tested positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI's total to 267. In Guam, eight more people died of COVID-related illnesses between Sept. 24-26.

These developments come even as the Commonwealth

See PFIZER on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 8:19pm, Sept. 27, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated:	81.8%
Days since last community transmission	187

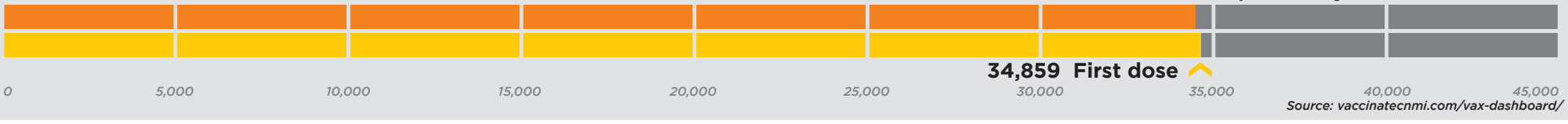
Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	29,999
Fully Vaccinated:	29,241
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,860
Fully Vaccinated:	4,636
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	794

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	14,501	35	14,536
Recovered	11,005	136	11,141
Active	3,168	35	3,203
Deaths	184	8	192

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	266	1	267
Traced via Travel Screening	229	1	230
Traced via Community Screening	37	0	37
Deaths	2	0	2

Source: Joint Information Center – Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

LOCAL
Brabu Pharmacy now offers immunizations, vaccine shots, and COVID-19 testing.

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LOCAL
Tyler's Gelatte Stone holds what's called "Small Business Sunday" at the Sugar King Park.

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BUSINESS
Thousands of British gas stations run dry as motorists scramble to fill up amid a supply disruption.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Brabu now offers vaccines and COVID-19 testing

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Brabu Pharmacy on Middle Road has expanded its services and is now offering various immunizations, vaccine shots, and a drive-thru COVID-19 testing. These services come after over a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, with more people now understanding how important taking care of one's health is by using preventive measures as a first line of defense, either by getting vaccinated, getting COVID-19 tests for travel requirements, or simply for one's peace of mind.

According to pharmacist Brianne Pampao, they started administering vaccinations in April when Brabu Pharmacy's pharmacy technicians were given authorization to give vaccines under the Health and Safety Prevention program.

"We do a lot of the chickenpox, pneumonia, Singrix shingles MMR, Gardasil, and flu vaccines. For chickenpox, we only vaccinate 13 years old and over. …For pneumonia, there are two vaccines—Prevnar 13 and Pneumo vaccine and the age range is 50 years old and up but if you are over 65, it's recommended to get a booster. For Singrix shingles, [it's for] 50 years old and above and for flu shots, we do 13 years old and over…and every year, there is a new flu vaccine that comes out based of predicted strains that are most prevalent," she said.

Pampao said that for people who already got their COVID-19 vaccine, it is okay to get the other shots as well. "…however, you cannot get them on the same day. It is recommended that vaccines should be two weeks apart for the body to have time to build up the antibodies and to be fully effective. Some people say they get the flu shot and get sick from it, which is not true as it may be they picked up something in between the two weeks that it takes for the vaccine to become effective."

For vaccines, Brabu Phramacy accommodates walk-ins from 9am to 12pm only. The period from 12pm to 6pm is for appointments only. "We accept medical insurance like Aetna, Calvo's Insurance, Blue Cross. …We have a contract with pretty much all the medical providers out there except Medicaid because they require that the patient go to the hospital and get the service from there," Pampao said.

"…We keep track of everyone: when they get the first shot and, when they are due for their second shot, we call to remind them to come in," she added.

Brabu's COVID-19 testing started yesterday after acquiring the analyzer and kit last week. "We offer COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Testing and our pharmacy technicians do the testing. …This is not a PCR test but an antigen test to show if you have an active infection or not. …This is for people make sure that they don't have it or if they need it as a travel requirement," Pampao said. "The process just takes 15 minutes and for only $48. Unfortunately, it's not covered under any insurance. We give it between 9am and 5:30pm and we require an appointment. To make it convenient for people, we also do it while they are in the car. When they arrive, they can just call us and we will go out to do the testing. This process is beneficial, like if they have a chance of testing positive, they are not exposed to others," Pampao added.

Brabu Pharmacy technician RJ Dris administers a vaccine/immunization shot to a patient.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Brabu owner and pharmacist Ted Parker said that Brabu Pharmacy added these services because this is part of preventive medicine. "Anything that you can do to prevent people from getting sick is our responsibility and because we are here in the community as opposed to being in a hospital or a clinic, most patients find it more accessible here—a lot quicker as you can just get in, get your shot, and you walk out. …When you go to a clinic or hospital, waiting time could be two or three hours to get a flu shot or something like that."

"This is a general trend in the U.S. mainland and more people are getting their vaccinations in their local pharmacy. The states that have very good rates of COVID-19 vaccination is because most patients went to the local pharmacy and got their COVID-19 vaccination. It's just a matter of providing that service to the public, improve public health in general and you do that by preventing disease and that's what vaccinations do," he added.

Last day to submit PUA applications is Monday, Oct. 4

The CNMI Department of Labor is reminding the public that the last day to submit both online or paper Pandemic Unemployment Assistance applications is Monday, Oct. 4, 2021.

PUA claimants may choose to submit their paper applications on the final day of submission on Monday, Oct. 4, 2021. On this date, all applicants—regardless of their last name spelling (A-Z)—will be allowed to submit their paper applications from 7:30am to 4:30pm at the Department of Labor Building 1334 on Capital Hill.

RELATED NEWS
- Benavente: Overpayments in PUA 1 will be taken from PUA 3.
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New PUA claimants must submit their initial claim and corresponding weekly certifications in order to be considered for the PUA program no later than Oct. 4, 2021.

Claimants who are continuing their weekly certifications and are still in the same status (furloughed/laid off/reduced hours) as they were in the first round of PUA (effective Feb. 2, 2020, to Dec. 26, 2020), should submit weekly certifications for the second and third round (effective Dec. 27, 2020, to Sept. 4, 2021) of the PUA program.

All applications received by the department will be reviewed and determined for eligibility of the PUA benefits.

For further information, contact the PUA Communication Center at 322-8870/8871/8872/887/8874 or email info@puamarianas.com or visit the PUA office at the CNMI DOL Building 1334 on Capital Hill.

Additional Department of Labor telephones:
- PUA Fraud Hotline 989-9095
- Benefits Payment Control Unit 322-9943/322-9944
- Administrative Services 664-3196/322-9947
- Employment Services 664-3190/322-9934/664-3298
- Enforcement Division 322-4365/323-9940
- Administrative Hearing Office 664-3290/664-3291
- OSHA 664-3156/664-3157
- WIOA 664-1708/664-1757

(PR)

Cannabis Commission managing director supports bill to clarify their powers

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

CNMI Cannabis Commission managing director Monique Boyer Sablan has expressed support for the intent of a bill that would clarify the commission's powers and make needed changes to the Commonwealth Code to support adequate development of the cannabis industry in the Commonwealth.

Speaking during the public comment portion of the House of Representatives session last Thursday, Sablan said House Bill 22-78 is in line with their duty as regulators of this new industry, promote their mission to fairly and effectively continue to ensure the adequate functioning of the industry, promote a robust regulatory system for cannabis licensees to adhere to, and encourage adult-use in the Commonwealth.

Rep. Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan) introduced the bill during Thursday's session.

Sablan said the commission supports the amendment proposed in the bill as it clarifies that the prohibition within a subsection of the Commonwealth Code should not apply to persons between the age of 18 to 21 years who have a valid recommendation for medical marijuana use issued by a doctor licensed in the CNMI or by a country of origin for a non-CNMI resident patient. She said medical marijuana patients that fall within this age bracket have been exempted from certain prohibitions in the law and that this amendment further clarifies their medicinal marijuana privileges.

Sablan said the commission also supports the bill's proposed amendment that removes the line item that prevents the commission from denying a person 21 years of age or older from obtaining a homegrown marijuana industry card. She said since the initiation of the homegrown industry, the commission believes that there should be reasonable grounds set in place for denial.

Sablan said they also support the bill's proposed amendment to remove the set expirations of all commercial cannabis licenses on Sept. 30 of each year, which will allow licenses to expire on the date of licensing the following year.

She said with commercial cannabis charged for renewal on Sept. 30 of this year, the commission has been thoroughly reviewing all renewal applications to ensure that the existing businesses are compliant with Commonwealth law and the cannabis regulations.

"Within the coming years, the commission anticipates the licensing of several new cannabis businesses. With this, the across-the-board expiration date for all licenses will evidently pose an administrative burden on the commission and may cause unwarranted delays in renewals," Sablan said.

This amendment, she said, will allow the commission to be able to spread out the renewal processing per license, which will prevent any administrative setbacks due to capacity.

CNMI Cannabis Commission managing director Monique Boyer Sablan explains to members of the House of Representatives during a session Thursday of the commission's support for a bill that clarifies the commission's powers and makes needed changes to the Commonwealth Code to support adequate development of the cannabis industry in the Commonwealth. FERDIE DE LA TORRE

"More importantly, it will allow my team the ample time to plan, review, and inspect accordingly," said Sablan, adding that it will allow licensees to be in operation for a full year from the date of licensing-promoting successful business.

Not guilty plea for man accused of strangling woman

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

A man who is accused of strangling and beating a woman after she refused a "hickey" from him pleaded not guilty before the Superior Court yesterday.

Arnold Ilo Kapileo, 69, pleaded not guilty before Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto Naraja yesterday for the charges of strangulation, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace following his arraignment yesterday. He also waived the formal reading of his rights during the hearing.

Kapileo, who appeared out of custody, was ordered to return to court on Oct. 28 for a status conference.

Office of the Public Defender's JP Nogues represented Kapileo for the arraignment hearing while assistant attorney general Heather Barcinas represented the CNMI.

According to court documents, Kapileo allegedly punched and choked the victim in this case after she did not let him put a "hickey" on her neck on the evening of Sept. 14. She said Kapileo got upset and accused him of punching her neck, her back, and waist. He also allegedly tried to choke her.

When she tried to run to her neighbor's unit, the victim said Kapileo allegedly chased her, pressed his elbow on her neck, pushed her down on the floor and used his other hand to pull her hair.

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TORRES

From Page 1

and Governmental Operations Committee yesterday that the power and water billings at Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' residence in As Teo appears to be excessive.

Citing CUC's power and water billings in the total amount of $177,278, JGO chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) asked Camacho if the amount is above average. Camacho replied, "Yes, very much."

The JGO is looking into Torres' expenditures of public funds and travels.

In her closing statement after Camacho's testimony, Babauta said it is clear, based on the exhibit presented yesterday, that CNMI taxpayers were paying for at least three CUC accounts at the private residence of Torres, his wife, Diann, and the private residence of his sister, Judy Marie Torres in Koblerville.

These were "undoubtedly established" in Camacho's testimony, Babauta said, together with copies of the billings of the private residence of the Torres couple.

She said records also reflect that CNMI taxpayers paid for overlapping periods on these accounts, including the period right after Super Typhoon Yutu, when the entire island was without power.

Babauta noted that the records reflect that the account number registered in the name of Judy Marie Torres was paid total amount of $36,069 by the CNMI government for power usage for the period of January 2015 to September 2018.

However, she said, during the period of January 2018 to September 2018, records reflect that an account number registered in the name of Torres was also paid by the government.

Babauta said that, according to their exhibit, which is a work order from CUC, this meter number supplies utilities to a piggery, garage, and the outside kitchen on the governor's property.

Babauta said on Sept. 8, 2020, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. utilities were disconnected, putting patients' lives at risk. Yet during this same time period, Torres continued to rack up thousands of dollars in monthly utility bills on at least three utility accounts, has been in arrears, and was given preferential treatment and was never disconnected, even as his utility bill reached as high as $119,000, based on the records they have received from CUC, she said.

Babauta said that, based on Camacho's testimony, she finds it highly suspicious that adjustments are being made after the subpoena was issued last month. She said adjustments include an $11,000 transfer to the governor's brother, Joaquin Torres, and a $90,000 adjustment recently made that had no other justification than a determination by CUC management, nothing more.

The JGO hearing will continue tomorrow, Wednesday, at 10:30am, with Boating Safety official Kevin Aldan as the witness.

Citing, CUC records, Rep. Vicente Camacho (D-Saipan) said that between January 2015 and August 2021, Torres' total CUC billings for his three accounts at his As Teo residence, plus the governor's sister account in Koblerville, totaled $177,278. When he asked Gary Camacho if the amount seems excessive, the CUC chief replied that he would not want to speculate too much on how people live their lives and what they do in their homes but, seen against average billings. "obviously it ventures further away…"

In response to Rep. Edwin K. Propst's (D-Saipan) questions, Gary Camacho said the governor made a few late payments.

Gary Camacho said he's not sure if Torres was given any disconnection notice, but based on their records, there was none.

"Why does the governor have preferential treatment over our residences, many of whom have been just a day late and have had their power disconnected and had to pay the reconnection? What can we say to our ratepayers who have been disconnected while the governor has not paid several months and was never disconnected?" Propst asked.

Gary Camacho said that is not a CUC policy and that if there is any issue with that., then he is going to look into it.

When asked on who makes the determination not to disconnect the government, Gary Camacho said it depends on the communication and the commitment from the Department of Finance.

Camacho said if payments from Finance and those communications are with them and they are going to tell CUC that payment will on its way, or will be dealt very quickly, then he will make the decision and wait for that payment, even if it's several months late.

"If I may respond with all due respect to each and every one of you, many of the government agencies are behind. Many of them. This building, from my understanding, is behind on its payments," Camacho said.

He said most government agencies are behind on their payments and that he does not disconnect them. "I don't disconnect for the very reason that it's a government. That government needs to operate," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

PFIZER

From Page 1

Healthcare Corp. announced yesterday that it will be offering Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster shots to a select group of people.

CHCC said yesterday that the new case was identified by travel screening and was confirmed positive through arrival testing on Sept. 26. The individual has been quarantined and is being monitored, and CHCC's contact tracing team has already begun reaching out to individuals who were in closest contact with the traveler. CHCC added that there are currently no active COVID-19-related hospitalizations.

In Guam, the Joint Information Center was notified of eight additional COVID-related fatalities, with three of the cases being declared "dead on arrival."

The 185th COVID-19-related fatality was pronounced dead on arrival at the Guam Memorial Hospital on Sept. 24, 2021. The patient was a 56-year-old male, unvaccinated with no known underlying health conditions who tested positive on Sept. 24.

The 186th COVID-19-related fatality was dead on arrival on Sept. 25, 2021. The patient was a 69-year-old male, unvaccinated and with no known underlying health conditions who tested positive on Sept. 11.

The 187th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at GMH on Sept.25, 2021. The patient was an 80-year-old male, unvaccinated, with underlying health conditions who tested positive on Sept. 9.

The 188th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at GMH on Sept. 25, 2021. The patient was a 75-year-old male, unvaccinated with underlying health conditions who tested positive on Sept. 18.

The 189th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at GMH on Sept. 25, 2021. The patient was a 70-year-old male, unvaccinated with underlying health conditions who tested positive on Aug. 30.

The 190th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at GMH on Sept. 25, 2021. The patient was a 75-year-old male, unvaccinated with underlying health conditions who tested positive on Sept. 13.

The 191st COVID-19-related fatality occurred at the Guam Regional Medical City on Sept. 26, 2021. The patient was an 80-year-old male, unvaccinated, with underlying health conditions who tested positive on Sept. 17, 2021.

The 192nd COVID-19-related fatality was pronounced dead on arrival at GMH on Sept. 26, 2021. The patient was a 53-year-old male, unvaccinated with no known underlying conditions who tested positive on Sept. 26.

Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero condoled with the families of these victims, saying "[First gentleman] Jeff [Cook], [Lt. Gov.] Josh [Tenorio], and I keep you in our thoughts and prayers. …In the face of the toll upon us this evening, we recognize our fight with this deadly virus is far from over but we are not defenseless. With added interventions in place, including vaccinations and monoclonal antibody therapy, we can protect those we love and prevent further devastation."

CHCC said in a statement last night that, with guidance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Food and Drug Administration, it will be offering Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster shots to people aged 65 years and older; people aged 18-64 years with underlying health conditions; and people aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional settings.

Individuals can obtain a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine by walking into the COVID-19 mass vaccination site (i.e., Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center), or through the CHCC Immunization Clinic, and requesting the third dose. Consent forms must be completed by patients at the time of vaccination for the booster shot. The consent forms will include a section in which the patient/vaccine recipient will self-attest to qualifying under any of the aforementioned categories and that they have already received two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

People 65 years and older and people aged 50-64 years with underlying medical conditions should receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least six months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series. A full list of underlying medical conditions that qualify for this booster shot can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html.

People aged 18-49 years with underlying medical conditions and people aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting may receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least six months after their Pfizer- BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks. A list of occupations with an increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html.

The Pfizer-BioNTech booster authorization applies to individuals whose primary series was the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. More data on the effectiveness and safety of the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson/Janssen booster shots are expected soon, and the CHCC will keep the public informed on the availability of Moderna and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen booster shots.

Additional populations may be recommended to receive a booster shot as more data becomes available. The COVID-19 vaccines approved and authorized in the U.S. continue to be effective at reducing the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death.

Reactions reported after getting the Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot were similar to the two-shot primary series. Fatigue and pain at the injection site were the most commonly reported side effects, and overall, most side effects were mild to moderate. However, as with the two-shot primary series, serious side effects are rare but may occur.

Individuals who have questions should talk to their healthcare provider about their medical condition and whether getting a booster shot is appropriate for them. ***(With PR)***

LAWSUIT

From Page 1

ties agree to dismiss the case without prejudice," the agreement stated.

In a statement from Mendiola last night, he said he is thankful for the outcome of the lawsuit because it reaffirms the ongoing efforts to safeguard the community from the ongoing pandemic.

"Today is a reaffirmation of our ongoing and successful vaccination and mitigation efforts to safeguard our population from the COVID-19 pandemic. Judge Camacho's decision to maintain the termination of the former firefighters is in line with several precedents and court decisions throughout the country that uphold that states and territories are allowed enforce compulsory vaccination. Although, there is still a long process to the final disposition of this matter, I am still thankful of the outcome," he said.

Mendiola said that, although it is unfortunate that the department lost good firefighters through the process, the main priority remains the wellbeing of the CNMI community.

"To be clear, it was never the governor's nor my intention to go through this level of enforcement, yet the wellbeing of our community is of our utmost concern as we remain in a global pandemic. As firefighters and first responders, we are charged with the great responsibility of ensuring the safety of our community and that starts with us to protect ourselves through vaccination before answering the call of duty and to lead by example," Mendiola stated.

"I wish there was another way; however, we are still in a state of emergency and must take all necessary measures to protect our loved ones and, of course, our people. COVID-19 cases continue to spike across the country, and we are seeing an exponential increase in the number of COVID-19 cases at our borders and quarantine sites here in the CNMI. The pandemic remains a clear and present danger to our livelihood, as we see the positive cases go higher and higher. As firefighters, we are at the frontlines of this response, and we must continue the work of maintaining one of the most effective COVID-19 operations in the country," the commissioner added.

On Sept. 13, 2021, the court denied the plaintiff's request for a preliminary injunction on these grounds; they failed to exhaust their administrative remedies, the preliminary injunction was not a proper remedy for economic harm, and the plaintiffs did not have a strong likelihood of success on the merits for any of their claims, the level of threat of irreparable harm was not present, and the public's interest in protecting health outweighed the interest of plaintiffs.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the nine firefighters are still holding out hope and awaiting the Civil Service Commission's decision on their appeal following the Superior Court's denial of their requested preliminary injunction for reinstatement.

The firefighters will continue to push forward with their Civil Service Commission appeal, which is scheduled for a prehearing conference on Oct. 27.

The court found that the firefighters tried to short-circuit the administrative process and did not engage fully with the administrative process and exhaust all administrative remedies available to them when they filed their lawsuit simultaneously with their appeal.

NMTI celebrates latest milestones with 'kickoff ceremony'

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Technical Institute held yesterday what it called a "Kick Off Ceremony" to make official its partnerships with the Department of Corrections and the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. and to announce the opening of the trade school's new financial aid office.

Guests at yesterday's event included Gov. Ralph DLG Torres; Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios; members of NMTI's board of trustees; House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez and several other lawmakers; Northern Marianas College president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero; and TanHoldings chief executive officer Jerry Tan.

The event also featured special messages from members of the CNMI Youth Congress: floor leader YuriHana Deleon Guerrero Sasamoto and senator Easton Joel Cabrera Dela Cruz gave remarks in person, while pre-recorded remarks from speaker Cielo Citlalli Gutierrez Long and legislative secretary Abriette Patience T. Manglona were played at the event.

As part of event proceedings, NMTI interim chief executive officer Jodina Attao and NMTI's board of trustees signed agreements with the Department of Corrections and NMHC, launching an NMTI-DOC pilot program for inmates, and a scholarship fund for NMTI's low- to moderate-income students who are taking construction-related classes.

Last week, Attao said the pilot program for inmates was made possible through months of working closely with Corrections Commissioner Wally Villagomez, Sgt. Jeff Quitugua, and DOC legal counsel Leslie Healer. As part of the program, inmates will be able to take pre-requisite trades courses through NMTI. Upon completion of these courses, the inmates will be asked to complete a survey to choose a new specialized course for them to complete next.

The scholarship program, which is made possible through a $1,160,000 Community Development Block Grant that NMTI applied for through NMHC, will be used to cover the education costs of 100 NMTI students who are or will be pursuing a construction-related trade from 2021 onward.

In interviews after the event, Torres and Villagomez both lauded NMTI for what it was able to accomplish in the past six months in the midst of the school's transition into a government institution in 2019 and its closure last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I want to congratulate CEO Attao, the board, the instructors, and especially the students. I know that they've been through a lot on this transition, and I'm happy they're doing great. We're giving them the resources that they need, [and] I look forward to their success," said Torres.

"Any time there's a kickoff for something that provides opportunities for our youth, it's always a good thing. NMTI has a history of being an upstart, and there were issues [in the past but] it's good to see that this opportunity is still ongoing," said Villagomez.

Also part of yesterday's proceedings, a ribbon-cutting to announce the opening of NMTI's new financial aid office. For Villagomez, he said that finances have proved to be a struggle for many in the CNMI who hope to further their education, and is happy to see that NMTI has now opened an office to address this barrier to higher learning.

"The ribbon-cutting for their financial aid office is a good thing, [because] that's one of the struggles that students and individuals in our community face when it comes to furthering their education or expanding their knowledge. ...I wish NMTI and their partners the best of luck, because their success is the success of the community," Villagomez added.

Corrections Commissioner Wally Villagomez signs the memorandum of agreement that makes official a pilot program for inmates that would allow them to take trades courses through NMTI. Also in photo are, seated from left, NMTI board chair Mario Valentino, DOC's Sgt. Jeff Quitugua, DOC legal counsel Leslie Healer, and NMTI interim chief executive officer Jodina Attao. JOSHUA SANTOS

Bottom row from left, Northern Marianas Housing Corp.'s Kimo Rosario and Jesse Palacios and Northern Marianas Technical Institute board chair Mario Valentino and interim chief executive officer Jodina Attao share a photo with other members of NMTI's board of trustees after signing an inter-government agency agreement between NMTI and NMHC that makes official a $1.16-million scholarship fund for select NMTI students. The scholarship fund was made possible through a Community Development Block Grant that NMTI applied for through NMHC. JOSHUA SANTOS

Northern Marianas Technical Institute board chair Mario Valentino signs the inter-government agency agreement that makes official a $1.16-million scholarship fund for 100 NMTI students who are studying construction-related courses. The scholarship fund was made possible through a Community Development Block Grant that NMTI applied for through the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. Others in photo are, from left, NMHC's Kimo Rosario and Jesse Palacios and NMTI interim chief executive officer Jodina Attao. JOSHUA SANTOS

DPS: Two wanted for questioning

The Department of Public Safety is seeking the public's help in locating two individuals who are both wanted for questioning.

Rogoyawa

Duenas

In a post on the Facebook page of the NMI Crime Stoppers program, it said the police is looking for Serafina Rogoyawa and Matthew Duenas but clarified that any individual wanted for questioning does not mean that they have committed a crime but may have information that could aid an ongoing case.

Anyone with information on their whereabouts should contact the Criminal Bureau of Investigation at 664-9064 or 911. Those who wish to remain anonymous may call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. ***(PR)***

CEDA
COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950 | Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 | Fax: (670) 235-7147 | www.developcnmi.com

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

ON AN APPLICATION FOR A QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE AUTHORIZING THE ABATEMENT AND REBATE OF CERTAIN CNMI TAXES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that:

A. ***Public hearing.*** In accordance with the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and pursuant to the rule-making procedures of the Administrative Procedures Act, the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) will conduct a public hearing at the *New Cafeteria Building, next to Building D, Marianas High School, Bwaay Lane, Susupe, Saipan*, on *Friday, October 1, 2021*, at *5:00 p.m.*, on the application of *Marshall Holdings CNMI LLC*, Applicant for a Qualifying Certificate, which request is for tax relief by way of abatement and rebate of CNMI taxes in consideration of Applicant's proposed *$6.447 million for solar energy production, inter-island ocean transport, import/export and eco-tourism.* All pursuant to the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and as set out in the Applicant's application for a Qualifying Certificate.

B. ***Nature of hearing.*** This hearing shall be open to the public. Oral or written statements will be received from anyone wishing to testify thereat, which statement will be incorporated into the records of the hearing.

C. ***Further Information.*** For further information, please contact CEDA at the above telephone numbers or visit its office at the CEDA Building, Beach Road, Oleai, Saipan.

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

‘Small Business Sunday’ at Sugar King Park

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

For the third time, Tyler’s Gelatte Stone held Sunday what’s being billed as “Small Business Sunday,” an event where the community is treated to live music and small businesses are invited to promote and sell their products at Sugar King Park from 3pm to 6pm.

Last Sunday’s live entertainment was courtesy of the High Tides band, while the small businesses featured at the event included Candle J Saipan, Bonitu Basula, Mind2Muscle, CouplesCakery, and Neni Girl Nails.

In an interview with Tyler’s Gelatte Stone owner Benjamin Babauta, he said a portion of the money raised during “Small Business Sunday” goes to the Autism Society of the CNMI, with Tyler’s pledging to donate $1 to the ASCNMI for every gelato sold and more money being raised through donations from small businesses and a raffle held during the event. Babauta added that he plans to donate the money raised so far by the end of this month, and estimates that around $1,500 has been raised for the ASCNMI so far.

Babauta said he is pleased with community turnout so far, and thanked the Saipan Mayor’s Office—which manages Sugar King Park—and fellow Sugar King Park business tenants for their support of the weekly event.

“Overall it’s been good. We get good feedback and everybody’s happy, all the vendors are happy. At the end of the day, it’s about exposure, it’s about getting small businesses out there and getting the community supporting local businesses. Everybody wins at the end of the day,” said Babauta.

Bonitu Basula owners David and Lani Vinyard share a photo together during Sunday’s “Small Business Sunday” at Sugar King Park. Bonitu Basula specializes in turning seaglass into handcrafted jewelry.
JOSHUA SANTOS

Jiah Lee Iguel, who owns Candle J Saipan with her husband, Matt Iguel, poses at her table during the “Small Business Sunday” at Sugar King Park. Candle J Saipan makes quality scented candles made with natural soy and premium fragrance oils.
JOSHUA SANTOS

From left, Mind2Muscle’s Ro’anna Tudela, Cherese Palacios, and Rhe’ann Tudela share a photo together at their table during “Small Business Sunday” at Sugar King Park. Mind2Muscle offers various gym and fitness accessories such as resistance bands, socks, and duffle bags.
JOSHUA SANTOS

From left, Neni Girl Nails’ Aysha Cabrera and Hana Mafnas share a photo at their table during “Small Business Sunday” at Sugar King Park. Neni Girl Nails creates custom-made press-on nails.
JOSHUA SANTOS

Jennilyn Bernabe begins classes at Georgia Southwestern

AMERICUS, GA—Jennilyn Bernabe of Saipan began classes at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia, last Aug. 18, joining almost 400 incoming freshmen at the university.

First-year students were officially welcomed to the university community at the freshman convocation held Tuesday, Aug. 17. Each student was given a silver Presidential Challenge Coin by GSW president Dr. Neal Weaver to signify the beginning of their college journey at Georgia Southwestern. Upon graduation, they will receive a gold coin in its place, bestowing the silver coin to someone who made a significant impact on them during their time at Georgia Southwestern.

Georgia Southwestern State University is a public, four-year unit of the University System of Georgia with approximately 3,000 students. Visit www.gsw.edu for more information. ***(PR)***

NEW PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM MILESTONE

In less than two months, 1M borrowers apply for loan forgiveness through SBA PPP portal

The U.S. Small Business Administration reached a major milestone last Sept. 25 as its Paycheck Protection Program Direct Borrower Forgiveness Portal recorded its one millionth PPP loan forgiveness application for borrowers seeking forgiveness for loans of $150,000 or less.

“We are committed to delivering against the promise of forgiveness for our eligible PPP borrowers. Our innovative direct forgiveness portal is helping our PPP borrowers get back to doing what they do best—creating jobs and powering our nation’s economy,” said SBA administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman. “With over one million application submissions, our direct forgiveness portal has already given so many of our smallest businesses the ability to apply for forgiveness quickly and smoothly and move forward with their rebuilding and recovery. I encourage those eligible PPP borrowers who have yet to apply to visit SBA.gov or contact their lender today.”

Since the portal’s launch on Aug. 4, SBA has received applications for over $17 billion of relief from more than one million of America’s smallest businesses. In fewer than 45 days, 91% of all loans eligible for direct forgiveness in the 2020 PPP portfolio have been submitted, showcasing the SBA’s efficiency in delivering relief to entrepreneurs who suffered during the height of the pandemic. Furthermore, the number of Direct Forgiveness participating lenders has more than doubled from 600 when the portal opened, to over 1,400 today.

In addition, significant progress has been made on the 2021 PPP Loans with 65% of all loans eligible for direct forgiveness already submitted. The SBA has also been able to streamline the process for those not eligible for direct forgiveness using the COVID Health score, which eliminates the need for overwhelming paperwork to be provided to lenders, and serve over 600,000 borrowers to date.

With the introduction of the new PPP Direct Forgiveness Portal, the SBA has streamlined application processes in order to re-center the user experience around small business owners. Today, a borrower of a participating lender can now complete most or all of a forgiveness application using a computer or, for the first time, their smartphone. On average, users are able to complete and submit directly to the SBA their applications in just six minutes, and most receive their forgiveness decisions within a week from the date of submission.

Eligible interested borrowers can access the portal from the SBA website, https://directforgiveness.sba.gov. Borrowers that need assistance with their forgiveness applications or have questions can contact the PPP customer service team by calling (877) 552-2692, Monday – Friday, 8am – 8pm ET.

Borrowers whose loans are through banks that have chosen not to opt-in to the SBA’s direct forgiveness portal must apply through their lender for forgiveness. ***(PR)***

Benavente: Overpayments in PUA 1 will be taken from PUA 3

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimbely_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Those who were overpaid during the first phase of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program and are now awaiting their PUA 3 checks will have their overpayments deducted from their PUA 3 benefits, according to CNMI Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente

This was learned soon after members of the community reached out to *Saipan Tribune* to share their most recent struggles with the PUA program, one being that their PUA 3 payments were allegedly put on hold because it was just recently discovered that they were overpaid for PUA 1.

Benavente

Benavente clarified that because DOL recently went back to audit claims from PUA 1, they have discovered that there were individuals who either knowingly or unknowingly misfiled their earnings, resulting in overpayments.

Due to these overpayments, CNMI DOL held off on releasing these individuals' PUA 3 benefits until a payment agreement is set. However, Benavevente said DOL will have to remove at least 50% of the total PUA 1 overpayment from their PUA 3 benefits.

"We are just finally going back and auditing thousands of PUA 1 claimants who had mistakenly received an overpayment because many times, the PUA claimant would say on their portal, 'I earned $0 this week' and then they upload their paystubs that say they earned $200 that week. That's what we call misfiled earnings. Unfortunately, the misfiled earnings that they filed for from December to March, that's a lot of weeks," Benavente said. "Once we have processed an overpayment procedure or notice with the claimant, we're satisfied with that. If they're still out of work, they're still at reduced hours, then we're releasing PUA 3 based on the fact that we already have a written agreement between CNMI DOL and the PUA claimant stating, 'Here's what I'm going to pay on a bi-weekly or monthly basis.' Many of our claimants are barely making it. If they say they can only make $50 a month, they can pay $50 a month. But here's the catch. In order to recover PUA benefits that were overpaid, we try to take 50% from their PUA 3 benefits earned and they can pay the 50% on a monthly basis."

Benavente said that, although they have to recover overpaid funds, DOL wants to work out a fair agreement that won't push claimants further into poverty and won't jeopardize the relationship between CNMI DOL and the U.S. Department of Labor.

"The CNMI Department of Labor is not trying to delay these funds or push people further into poverty. We're trying to recover funds as best as we can. But we try to consider the situation like, are they working? Are they on reduced hours? Are they not working? So we can come up with a way to assist claimants with a payment plan that will not push them further below the poverty line, or make things more difficult. If we can make the effort to help the applicant pay back some of these overpayments, then we can show USDOL that we made that effort and they can keep granting us funds for a continuation of PUA or any other type of assistance," she said.

September is Library Card Sign Up Month

September is Library Card Sign-up Month, a time when Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, the Bookmobile, Antonio C. Atalig Memorial Library, and the Tinian Public Library join the American Library Association and libraries nationwide to remind parents, caregivers and students that signing up for a library card is the first step on the path to academic achievement and lifelong learning.

There is nothing more empowering than signing up for your own library card. Through access to technology, media resources and educational programs, a library card gives students the tools to succeed in the classroom and provides people of all ages opportunities to pursue their dreams and passions.

Libraries offer everything from early literacy programs to virtual homework help and GED classes, helping transform lives and communities through education.

During September, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library will host Library Card Sign-up activities: Resume Writing Workshops, Friday Family Fun Nights @ Your Library, Friday Toddler Storytime, Saturday Read Aloud, Teen Activities, Computer Classes, and so much more!

"Libraries play an important role in the education and development of children," said JKPL director Erlinda C. Naputi. "We have innovative library programs and activities that serve students of all ages and backgrounds such as our Friday Toddler Storytime or our Saturday Read Aloud at the Children of Our Homeland Center (aka Children's Library), 1,000 Books before Kindergarten Program, educational library tours for our public and private schools, sign up for Motheread/Fatheread CNMI Family Literacy Classes for Children and Adults; our Teen Volunteer Program wherein we provide service learning opportunities for teens to learn about our library programs and activities, computer classes, typing classes, resume writing workshops, virtual learning resources from the following: MANGO Languages for learning a new language; research databases from EBSCOhost or GALE Cengage for students and educators; educational virtual tutorials from Niche Academy; Baker & Taylor Axis 360 for best-seller e-books; READsquared for Reading Challenges."

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, the Bookmobile, Antonio C. Atalig Memorial Library, and the Tinian Public Library along with libraries everywhere, continue to adapt and expand services to meet the evolving needs of our community. ***(PR)***

ABOARD AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Shaun Babauta, a native of Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands, operates a tow truck in the hangar bay aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* last Sept. 25, 2021. The *Carl Vinson* Carrier Strike Group is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations to enhance interoperability through alliances and partnerships while serving as a ready-response force in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

U.S. NAVY/MCS3 JEFF D. KEMPTON

CLI - CNMI

A non-profit organization run by and for persons with disabilities

Center for Living Independently in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
#1366 Anatahan Dr. & Guguan Dr.
P.O. Box 5759 chrb
Office: 670-322-4303/04
Cell: 670-287-4303/04
Email: clisusansatur@gmail.com
Fax: 670-322-4307
website: https://clicnmi.wixsite.com/clihome

Job Vacancy Announcement
Independent Living Skills (ILS) Trainer

Job description:
Assists clients with self-care
Teaches communication skills
Trains and assists with community living
Teaches socialization skills
Increases the client's independence
Encourages interaction with people without disabilities who are not caregivers
Provides schedules, routines, environments, and interaction similar to persons without disabilities of a comparable age
Supports the development of decision-making skills and informed choices in all aspects of daily living
Assist director and admin

Documents required
DIPLOMA/DEGREE, RESUME/BIODATA, CURRENT POLICE CLEARANCE, COPY OF VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE, Covid Vaccination record card.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE
Please submit resumes to clisusansatur@gmail.com or submit to Building 1366 in capitol hill

Closing Date: Friday October 15, 2021 at 4:00pm

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
Procurement & Property Management Office
P.O. Box 501250 • Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Phone: (670) 234-5498 Ext. 6824 • Email: ppmo@marianas.edu

INVITATION FOR BIDS

NMC IFB 21-0005
INSTALLATION & RETROFIT OF COURTYARD OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACE
BLDG O.

Northern Marianas College is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the Installation and Retrofit of Courtyard outdoor learning space, Bldg. O, Saipan Campus.

The bid specifications and Scope of Work packet may be pick up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. P, commencing Friday, SEPTEMBER 17, 2021 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.** Electronic packet, please send a request to Anita Camacho @ ppmo@marianas.edu.

A Pre-bid meeting and Site visit is scheduled for 09:00am October 01, 2021, NMC Conference Room, attendance is not mandatory but is strongly recommended.

Hard copies Bid submission
Procurement & Property Management Office, Bldg. P,
As Terlaje Campus Saipan
Due Date and Time: 10:00am, October 08, 2021, ChST

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through US Department of Education, Emergency Assistance to Institution of Higher Education Grant, award no. P938T190005. In accordance with Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is not available to local businesses for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The College reserves the right to reject any and/or all bid offers for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College.

/s/Anita Camacho
Procurement Manager

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM • WEBSITE:WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) Board of Directors hereby gives notice that a special meeting is being called on Thursday, September 30, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. in the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Classroom at the Airport Fire Station located at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport on the island of Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. **PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes (September 17, 2021)

II. **PUBLIC COMMENT(S)**

III. **SPECIAL MEETING ITEMS:**
1. Airport and Seaport Rent Relief

IV. **EXECUTIVE SESSION (if needed)**

V. **MISCELLANEOUS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Written testimony on the agenda items may be sent via email before the meeting to cpa.admin@pticom.com. Attendees (in person) must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS
Chairwoman, Board of Directors

September 27, 2021

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXI, Issue No. 192

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

An employee uprising over vaccine mandates? Not so much

Remember those vaccine mandates? They might be working after all.

North Carolina's major health care systems were some of the first employers in the state to announce a COVID vaccine mandate. Now, they're finding that the vast majority of workers are willing to comply.

The deadline for UNC Health's roughly 29,000 employees to get vaccinated was Tuesday. Nearly 95% of those workers are in compliance with the mandate, health system officials said, and just 60 have resigned.

Similarly, 98.6% of more than 35,000 Novant Health employees have either received a dose of the COVID-19 vaccines or have been granted a medical or religious exemption. Just about 1% of workers are non-compliant and have been suspended, according to the hospital system. Those workers have been given five days to get vaccinated, and it's likely at least some—and probably most—will comply.

The same is true of employers across the country. Delta Air Lines, for example, has seen a boost in its employee vaccination rate since announcing that unvaccinated employees would be penalized, with no increase in resignations, the airline said. Tyson Foods, which announced a vaccine requirement in August, cut the number of unvaccinated workers in half in less than a month.

For a while, many worried that vaccine mandates would result in a widespread quitting spree among those who weren't willing to comply. Initial data in December 2020 from the Society for Human Resource Management suggested that 28% of workers would be willing to lose their job over the vaccine. But the mass resignations that many swore were coming haven't materialized—more recent data indicates that the actual number of employees who have resigned over COVID policies is somewhere around 2%.

Surveys have shown broad public support for vaccine mandates, especially when handed down as a condition of employment. Still, support is split along party lines. After President Biden announced sweeping vaccine mandates that will affect some 100 million U.S. workers, Republicans called for public uprising and "mass civil disobedience," with South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster vowing to fight Biden and other Democrats "to the gates of hell."

Of course, there's a difference between hypotheticals and real life. By all indications, those willing to put up a fight are a small—albeit loud—minority. We've seen remarkably little fury from employees; most are quietly choosing their paycheck and, we hope, the reality that the vaccines are safe and effective against the spread of COVID-19.

There are still a handful of vaccine holdouts, and in more rural communities, that might have a greater impact on the workforce. But most people, when given the choice, are getting the shot. That should be a signal to cities like Charlotte, which have low vaccination rates among police and firefighters, to mandate the vaccine as a condition of employment. Odds are, employees would rather keep their jobs (and their pensions) by rolling up their sleeves and getting the shot.

See EMPLOYEE on Next Page

MIKE SMITH
LAS VEGAS SUN 2021
DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE, INC.
I'M MUCH MORE RELAXED NOW THAT WE HAVE A PRESIDENT WITH A WEEKLY CRISIS INSTEAD OF A PRESIDENT WITH AN HOURLY CRISIS.

Beware the strings attached to all that government spending

By RACHEL GRESZLER
The Heritage Foundation

Rachel Greszler is a research fellow in economics at The Heritage Foundation (heritage.org).

"Give me a one-handed economist," Harry Truman once famously demanded. "All my economists say, 'On the one hand … but on the other'."

His frustration was understandable. But when it comes to legislation that can affect the well-being of all Americans, it's vital to weigh all the pros and cons.

Consider the radical $3.5 trillion spending package now before Congress. Some lawmakers are demanding passage based on a one-sided assessment of the impact its proposals will have on American workers, families and businesses. But as workers who have recently benefited from significant wage increases only to see them eaten away by high inflation now realize, it's important to consider not only the benefits something provides, but also the consequences.

So sure, tell American workers and families about the shiny new government programs that might be available to them as policymakers seek to spend another $27,000 per household.

But tell them also how those big government policies might affect the taxes they pay, the paychecks they earn, the opportunities available to them, and the prices they're charged for everything from gas and groceries to utilities and child care.

Unlike politicians who can seemingly spend other peoples' money and incur debt on their behalf, ordinary Americans have to balance their budgets and repay their debts.

Take the proposal to increase taxes on corporations. Since corporate buildings can't pay taxes, it ends up being the people who work inside them who take the biggest hit, with 70 percent of corporate taxes being passed on to workers through lower wages and benefits.

Speaking of benefits, the proposed new federal paid family leave entitlement program might seem very appealing -- particularly to big companies and "blue" states that would receive windfall grants. But the way it's structured would prevent companies from creating new paid family leave benefits and would impose new rules and restrictions on existing programs.

Most workers would rather talk to their direct supervisor about their need for leave than to submit an application to a federal program where distant bureaucrats would apply one-size-fits-all rules to determine their eligibility. And if the paid leave is approved, workers don't want to undergo a one-week waiting period, nor is granting only a portion of workers' paychecks necessarily enough to pay their bills.

Of course, for workers who don't yet have access to paid family leave, a federal program could be a big win. That is, unless they are among the 45 percent of disproportionately lower-income workers who wouldn't be able to use federal paid family leave benefits without risking losing their jobs.

Perhaps the heavily subsidized child care proposal sounds like a dream come true. After all, child care is expensive, and it can be really hard for families to find the type of care they want. But only 14 percent of families want the type of center-based child care that this proposal would subsidize. Even after lawmakers pump hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars into government-prescribed child care centers, many families would end up with child-care environments they don't want for their kids.

Or take the environment. A cleaner one is something most Americans can appreciate, but is it worth an extra $8,000 in costs per year for a typical household?

"Pro-worker" legislation seems like a no-brainer because, after all, most households have a worker in them. But what would "pro-worker" provisions actually mean? Most workers don't want to have $600 in union dues taken out of their paychecks without their permission, especially if the majority of it goes to supporting political causes and political candidates that don't reflect their own personal preferences.

Most workers want to be paid based on their productivity, but pro-worker legislation seeks rigid wage scales. And an increasing number of workers want to work independently, but "pro-worker" legislation would actually prohibit many independent workers from being their own bosses.

And finally, for everyone already fearful of even higher inflation — or worse, 1970s-style stagflation — adding another $4.6 trillion in federal spending (including the $1.1 trillion infrastructure and $3.5 trillion reconciliation packages) only exacerbates these concerns.

Moreover, specific policies would add fuel to current fires. It's already hard enough to find workers with a record-high 10.9 million job openings in the U.S., but the proposed infrastructure package calls for simultaneously increasing the demand for infrastructure workers while limiting the supply of such workers to strictly unionized workers — making roughly one out of every eight construction workers eligible for construction projects.

On the one hand, the $3.5 trillion package offers something for everyone. On the other hand, it restricts incomes, limits choices, and stokes fiscal distress and inflation fears. Lawmakers would be wise to replace enticing "giveaways" with policies that provide lasting improvements to Americans' well-being.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

A renewed perspective on Catholicism

By IN KOOK KIM
Special to the Saipan Tribune

In Kook Kim is the Head of Mission at the Consular Office of the Republic of Korea in Hagatna, Guam.

I joined the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992. One of my reasons for joining was to broaden my horizon and mindset. I learned early on that common sense, as applied in Korea, is not always applicable in the rest of the world. I knew that if my experiences were multi-cultured, it would result in an unbounded and global mindset, one that I was yearning for. As expected, I experienced culture and religion through foreign service and was thankfully able to expand the scope of my mindset.

Before moving to Guam, I experienced Buddhism in Cambodia, Shinto in Japan, Hinduism in India, and Islam in Pakistan, just to name a few. After arriving in Guam, I experienced a new type of religion, Catholicism. Over the past few months, I have immersed myself in Guam, its culture and religion. I also wrote an article about Archbishop Flores' awe-inspiring life journey. Through my research and experience, I now begin to appreciate a different outlook on Catholicism. I have made some observations as follows:

1. Obituaries in the newspaper: If a family member passes away, it appears in the obituary section of the newspaper. This obituary is large in size. In most countries, obituaries are limited to a small square. However, Guam's way of obituaries allows one to see a glimpse of a person's life and the value and meaning of their life is perceived through the obituary.

2. Catholic cemeteries: I was surprised to see the neat, diverse, and beautiful artificial flower arrangements at the Pigo Catholic Cemetery. I supposed that the preparation and upkeep of these final resting places are elaboration itself. I could clearly sense the heart and spirit of the loved ones just by looking at the floral arrangements/wreaths.

3. The crosses on Mount Jumullong Manglo: I was deeply impressed to see 14 dilapidated wooden crosses on Mount Jumullong Manglo. It, in my opinion, serves as compelling evidence of the local people's religious fervor to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Moreover, I have initially thought Mount Jumullong Manglo was Mount Lam Lam. But, on my third trekking attempt there, I learned that it was not Mount Lam Lam but was, in fact, Mount Jumullong Manglo. Through this experience, I realized that the truth is elusive and can sometimes be reached through ceaseless fact-finding efforts.

While learning more about the history of Guam Catholics, I came across the story of Monsignor Calvo who steadfastly contributed to setting up a Guam/Japan memorial site, now known as the South Pacific Memorial Park, through getting proper permits and/or active fundraising efforts in Japan and U.S.A. (federal and the Guam government). So, how did he contribute? Through an attitude of faith and hope, coupled with the ability to build strong coalitions with key stakeholders that allowed the manifestation of long-lasting peace. Having met some of the clergy members in Guam, I'm of the opinion that most of them, akin to most Guamanians, are faithful, sacrificial, resilient and peaceful.

It was far-fetched to me when I first discovered another example of the pursuit for peace in Guam in connection to Catholicism: Pale San Vitores Road and the nearby Matapang Beach in Tumon Bay. Padre Diego Luis de San Vitores was killed by Chief Matapang in 1672. This historical incident may be interpreted as an aspect of the clash of cultures. However, I felt as if the legacy of this cultural clash were sublimated into the noble example of coexistence on the island of *Inafa'maolek*.

Although my thoughts in this article are still a far cry from in-depth knowledge, I strongly believe that experience is the father of wisdom. Interestingly it used to take me at least two years to gain a robust perspective of the culture and social fabric of a new place. It is my earnest hope that I will get a better grasp of the culture and religion of Guam as I add to my truth-seeking days here.

What would Jesus do? He'd get vaccinated, that's what

By ROBIN ABCARIAN
Los Angeles Times

One year ago, when my father was sliding toward the end, I had occasion to call 911 three times in the weeks before he died.

During each fraught first-responder visit, my house filled with at least half a dozen brawny, uniformed paramedics and firefighters. We stood inches from one another as they took my father's vital signs to determine why he had fallen or passed out or—on the last visit—whether he'd had a catastrophic stroke.

This is the kind of vulnerable person that our vaccine-resistant firefighters are metaphorically spitting on when, in the name of personal or religious freedom, they refuse any of the widely available, safe and efficacious COVID-19 vaccines.

About half our city firefighters and police officers have refused to vaccinate.

A group of Los Angeles Police Department employees has filed a federal lawsuit against the city, which has imposed a vaccine mandate on city employees, accusing the city of violating their constitutional rights to privacy and due process.

The Firefighters 4 Freedom Foundation, a group of more than 500 members of the city's Fire Department, has sued the city in state court, declaring themselves "pawns in a political chess match."

They are pawns all right—manipulated by social-media-spawned misinformation, ignorance and antagonism toward scientific expertise.

And now we learn that about a quarter of the Police Department's workforce has indicated it plans to pursue religious exemptions to the vaccine, a patently absurd and disingenuous dodge. Similar requests are being made by public employees all over the country.

This rash of religious awakenings is inspired by the passage in the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act that says employers must make reasonable accommodations for workers who object to work requirements because of "sincerely held" religious beliefs.

But the law also says exemptions cannot place an "undue" burden on employers, nor be based on political or social beliefs.

I would submit that our vaccine-resistant first responders are placing an undue burden on all of us, and that they are doing so for reasons that have nothing to do with religion.

No major world religion has prohibitions against vaccinations. Even Christian Science, a sect known for favoring prayer over medical intervention for illness, encourages its adherents to follow public health guidelines, including vaccination mandates.

Curtis Chang, a former Christian pastor, created the website Christians and the Vaccine to explore, and try to allay, objections to vaccines on various grounds.

In a conversation Monday, he told me that Christian Scientists are OK with vaccines because they believe in Christ's profound message to "love thy neighbor as thyself."

"The vaccine effort has been plagued by falsehoods of all kinds," Chang wrote in a recent New York Times essay. "The religious exemption from vaccine mandates for Christians is the latest lie."

Californians are familiar with the vaccine wars, having gone through the vax hysteria of 2015 after a measles outbreak at Disneyland prompted Democratic state Sen. Richard Pan, a pediatrician, to introduce legislation eliminating the personal belief exemption for schoolchildren whose parents did not want to immunize their kids. He weathered death threats and physical assault, but the bill was signed into law by then-Gov. Jerry Brown, and Pan has continued to push the issue. This year, he proposed a law that would make it illegal to harass or disturb people at vaccination sites. It awaits Gov. Gavin Newsom's signature.

In 2019, after it became clear that a small number of doctors were responsible for a large spike in medical exemptions, Pan introduced a bill, signed into law by Newsom, requiring state health officials to vet every such request.

I was always surprised that some of the most passionate childhood immunization skeptics and holdouts were well-educated left-wing types who believed they knew what was best for their children.

In 2015, Marin County was a major anti-vax stronghold. Curiously, though, Marin County now has one of the highest COVID-19 vaccination rates in the state.

"That really speaks to the ideological cast that is driving the resistance to this vaccine," Pan told me. "It's not based on science or information. The politicization of public health has driven this."

White Christian evangelicals, especially men, are the largest demographic group of COVID-19 vaccine holdouts, according to public health officials.

Some believe that fetal cell lines, obtained through abortion, were used in the development of COVID-19 vaccines. (The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were not developed with fetal cell lines; the Johnson & Johnson vaccine used a fetal cell line that was first created in 1985.) Some just don't want the government telling them what to do.

Russell Moore and Walter Kim of the National Assn. of Evangelicals have urged their followers to get the shots: "Indeed," they wrote, "the vaccines are a cause for Christians to rejoice and to give glory to God.... By getting vaccinated as soon as our time is called, we can actively work for what we have been praying for—churches filled with people, hugs in the church foyer, and singing loudly the hymns we love."

The Catholic Church agrees: "It is morally acceptable to receive Covid-19 vaccines that have used cell lines from aborted fetuses in their research and production process," declared the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Pope Francis has said getting vaccinated is "an act of love."

Pan told me about an employer in Arkansas, Conway Regional Hospital, that created a list of common medications developed using fetal cell lines after many of its employees said they objected to the COVID-19 vaccine for religious reasons. To ensure their beliefs were sincerely held, the hospital asked them to vow that they do not and will not use medications including Tylenol, Pepto Bismol, Tums, Lipitor, Ex-Lax, Benadryl, Albuterol, Claritin, Zoloft, Ibuprofen and Preparation H.

Pan also mentioned a news report he'd seen out of Missouri, where patients secretly got vaccinations, or even showed up in disguise at pharmacies, because they didn't want to be harassed or challenged by anti-vax friends and family members.

If you're wondering what Jesus would do, by now it should be pretty obvious: Love your neighbor, get the shot.

EMPLOYEE

From Page 8

It should also be a signal to North Carolina. Currently, only some state workers are required to either show proof of vaccination or get tested weekly, and disciplinary measures remain undecided for those who fail to comply. That policy should be enforced and expanded to include all workers employed by the state.

Yes, there are some who will never agree to get the vaccine. A mandate won't change their mind; it was never going to. But we shouldn't indulge their wishes simply because they're the loudest, and we shouldn't let the few risk the health of the many, or give the virus further opportunities to mutate.

Much of the noise surrounding vaccine mandates is just that: noise. Employers should take the leap in requiring vaccinations for their workers—after all, it's not much of a leap anymore.

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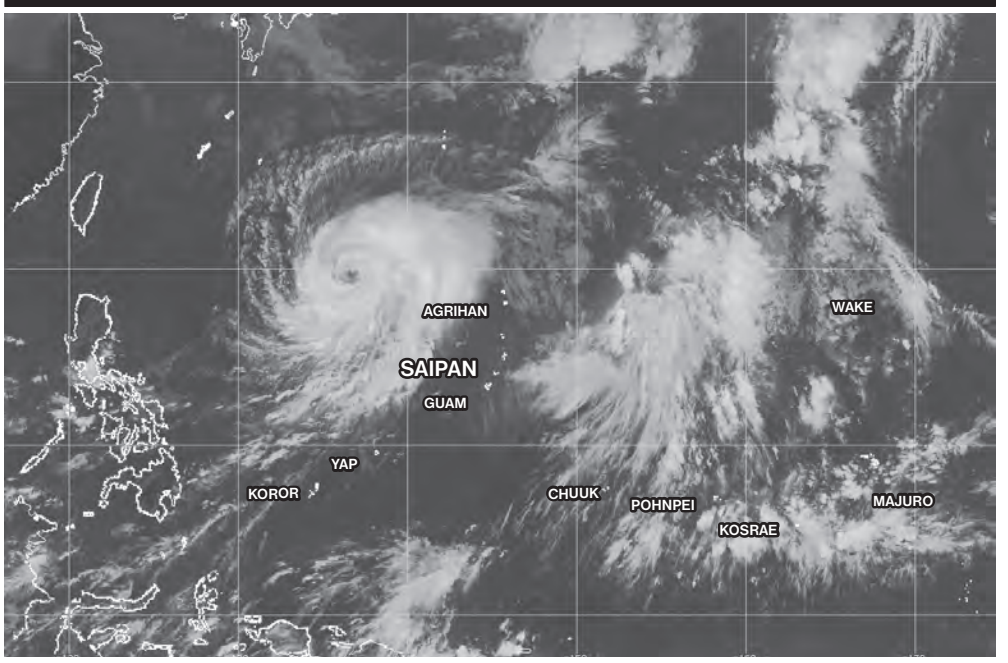
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. South winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Southeast winds around 10 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers
87° 78°	87° 78°	87° 78°	87° 78°	87° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:56 AM, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Light southerly winds and a few showers prevail across the Marianas this morning.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Mostly cloudy	82 / 89 °F
Palau	Afternoon clouds	82 / 88 °F
Yap	Partly cloudy	80 / 90 °F
Chuuk	Mostly cloudy	79 / 89 °F
Pohnpei	Morning clouds	76 / 87 °F
Kosrae	Morning clouds	82 / 89 °F
Majuro	Afternoon clouds	82 / 87 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:08 PM
Wednesday	6:06 AM	6:07 PM
Thursday	6:06 AM	6:07 PM
Friday	6:06 AM	6:06 PM
Saturday	6:06 AM	6:05 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	11:52 AM	11:16 PM
Wednesday	-	12:43 PM	-
Thursday	12:07 AM	1:34 PM	-
Friday	1:00 AM	2:24 PM	-
Saturday	1:55 AM	3:11 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly cloudy	54 / 61 °F
Beijing	Sunny	62 / 90 °F
Hong Kong	Morning clouds	81 / 89 °F
Honolulu	Mostly sunny	74 / 83 °F
London	Mostly sunny	64 / 86 °F
Los Angeles	Partly sunny	59 / 76 °F
Manila	Partly sunny	80 / 88 °F
Melbourne	Morning clouds	47 / 56 °F
Miami	Partly cloudy	81 / 88 °F
New York	Sunny	64 / 74 °F
Osaka	Mostly cloudy	67 / 85 °F
Paris	Partly cloudy	63 / 73 °F
Pusan	Partly cloudy	68 / 77 °F
Rome	Mostly cloudy	65 / 81 °F
Salem	Sunny	46 / 81 °F
San Francisco	Morning clouds	54 / 67 °F
Seoul	Morning clouds	62 / 84 °F
Tokyo	Mostly cloudy	72 / 81 °F
Washington, DC	Mostly sunny	66 / 78 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
6:14 AM	Low Tide	0.21
2:00 PM	High Tide	1.55
7:10 PM	Low Tide	1.27
11:16 PM	High Tide	1.46

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:45am	7:25am	1, 3, 6
UA117	9:45am	10:25am	2, 4, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	7:05pm	8:50pm	2, 5
UA183	7:25pm	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:45am	9:10pm	1, 3, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:45am	8:50pm	2, 5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:45am	9:10pm	4, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	3
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:00am	5:41am	1, 3, 6
UA174	8:00am	8:41am	2, 4, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	9:50pm	3:55am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:25pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	9:50pm	5:41am+1	2, 5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	5:41am+1	7 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	8:41am+1	1, 3, 4, 6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	3
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Business economists lower growth forecasts due to virus

NEW YORK (AP)—The nation's business economists now expect slower economic growth this year due to the widespread delta variant of the coronavirus, while also saying the economy could improve more quickly next year as vaccinations become more accepted.

In a survey being released Monday, the National Association of Business Economists found that its panel now expects full-year economic growth of 5.6%, down from a forecast for 6.7% growth in NABE's previous survey in May. However, economists raised their forecast for 2022 economic growth to 3.5% from a previous outlook of 2.8%.

The NABE's findings are based on the responses of 47 forecasters earlier this month.

Inflation should remain at elevated levels through the fourth quarter before moderating next year, the panelists predict. Consumers have faced sharply higher prices for goods and services this year as businesses deal with an unprecedented jump in wholesales prices.

While NABE's survey now sees inflation coming in this year at a hot 5.1% year-over-year, economists appear to believe the higher prices will mostly prove to be temporary. Inflation is expected to moderate next year to a level of 2.4%.

The coronavirus remains the dominant variable around how the U.S. economy will do for the rest of the year and into 2022, according to NABE. Roughly two-thirds of those surveyed see a potential vaccine-resistant version of the coronavirus being the biggest risk to the economy. A faster rollout of vaccines, however, would provide the biggest upside to the economy this year and next year, roughly half of the panelists said.

NABE's panelists were split on the issue of there being a potential labor shortage. About 44% of panelists said their companies were not experiencing any labor shortages or issues, while 35% said they were seeing a labor shortage. One in five panelists did not know or was unsure.

UK gas stations run dry as trucker shortage sparks hoarding

A view of a sign at a petrol station, in Bracknell England, Sunday Sept. 26, 2021. AP

LONDON (AP)—Thousands of British gas stations ran dry Sunday, an industry group said, as motorists scrambled to fill up amid a supply disruption due to a shortage of truck drivers.

The Petrol Retailers Association, which represents almost 5,500 independent outlets, said about two-thirds of its members were reporting that they had sold out their fuel, with the rest "partly dry and running out soon."

Association chairman Brian Madderson said the shortages were the result of "panic buying, pure and simple."

"There is plenty of fuel in this country, but it is in the wrong place for the motorists," he told the BBC. "It is still in the terminals and the refineries."

Long lines of vehicles formed at many gas stations over the weekend, and tempers frayed as some drivers waited for hours. Police were called to one London gas station Sunday after a scuffle broke out. Police said a man was arrested on suspicion of assault.

The haulage industry says the U.K. is short tens of thousands of truckers, due to a perfect storm of factors including the coronavirus pandemic, an aging workforce and an exodus of foreign workers following Britain's Brexit departure from the European Union last year.

Several countries, including the United States and Germany, also are experiencing a shortage of truck drivers. The problem has been especially visible in Britain, where it has contributed to empty supermarket shelves and shuttered gas pumps.

After weeks of mounting pressure, the U.K.'s Conservative government announced Saturday that it will issue thousands of emergency visas to foreign truck drivers to help prevent a Christmas without turkey or toys for many British families. The government said it would issue 5,000 three-month visas for truck drivers starting in October, and another 5,500 for poultry workers.

Industry groups welcomed the new visa plan, although the British Retail Consortium said it was "too little, too late."

Ruby McGregor-Smith, president of the Confederation of British Industry, said the announcement was "the equivalent of throwing a thimble of water on a bonfire."

What's the price of Biden's plan? Democrats drive for zero

WASHINGTON (AP)—What will it cost to enact President Joe Biden's massive expansion of social programs?

Congress has authorized spending up to $3.5 trillion over a decade, but Biden is prodding Democrats to fully cover the cost of the legislation—by raising taxes on corporations and the wealthy, negotiating the price of prescription drugs and dialing up other sources of federal revenue such as increased IRS funding.

The idea is that entire package should pay for itself.

Defending a bill not yet fully drafted, Democrats are determined to avoid a deficit financed spending spree. They are growing frustrated by the focus on the proposed $3.5 trillion spending total, arguing far too little attention is being paid to the work they are doing to balance the books. Biden on Friday said he would prefer the price tag described as "zero."

"We pay for everything we spend," Biden said at the White House. "It's going to be zero. Zero."

But the revenue side of the equation is vexing, and it's emerged as a core challenge for Democratic bargainers as they labor to construct one of the largest legislative efforts in a generation. Their success or failure could help determine whether the bulk of Biden's agenda becomes law and can withstand the political attacks to come.

Republicans, lockstep in opposition, aren't waiting for the details. They've trained their focus on the $3.5 trillion spending ceiling set by Democrats, pillorying that sum as fiscally reckless, misguided, big government at its worst.

"The radical left is pushing in all their chips—they want to use this terrible but temporary pandemic as a Trojan horse for permanent socialism," Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said Thursday. "Trillions upon trillions more in government spending when families are already facing inflation."

Part of the problem for Democratic leaders is the lack of a consensus about which programs to fund and for how long. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., acknowledge the price will likely come down and say they have a "menu" of revenue raisers to pay for it. But without certainty on what initiatives will be included, no final decisions can be made.

"This is not about price tag," Pelosi said Thursday. "This is about what's in the bill."

Biden and administration officials stress the plan is as much about fairness as dollars and cents. By taxing the wealthy and corporations, they hope to fund paid family leave and child tax credits that help those reaching for the middle class, all while adopting environmental and economic policies that help the U.S. compete with China. But the haggling over a final spending target is overshadowing the policy goals they are trying achieve.

Washington Rep. Pramila Jayapal, a lead negotiator for House progressives, said Friday that reporters should not depict the measure as costing trillions of dollars when the accompanying proposed tax increases would cover the cost.

"I just believe that this is going to be a zero-dollar-bill—that's the No. 1 priority," she said.

Sharron Parrott, president of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank based in Washington, warned Democrats that emphasizing the $3.5 trillion figure could detract from what they are trying to achieve.

"The debate so far has been overly focused on a single number: the $3.5 trillion in gross new investments over the next ten years—including both spending increases and tax cuts—that may be included in the package," Parrott wrote in an August blog post. "True fiscal stewardship requires a focus on the net cost of the package and, even more fundamentally, a focus on the merits of the investment and offset proposals themselves."

What Biden is really pushing are two goals that can easily come into conflict. He wants to restore the middle class to the epicenter of economic growth, but do so without worsening the national debt or raising taxes on people earning less than $400,000 a year.

Further complicating things is that many of his spending policies are actually tax cuts for the poor and middle class, which means he is raising taxes for one group in order to cut them for another.

Democrats also have to contend with how the measures are assessed by the Congressional Budget Office, the final arbiter of how the legislation will affect the federal balance sheet.

The Democrats' expanded child credit and dependent care credits, enacted earlier this year, are counted as costs in a CBO score. Biden wants to extend these programs as part of the budget, which he is now arguing amounts to one of the largest middle-class tax cuts in U.S. history.

Nation

Investigators probe deadly Amtrak derailment in Montana

Workers walk Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021, next to an Amtrak train that derailed Saturday just west of Joplin, Mont. AP

JOPLIN, Mont. (AP)—A team of investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board was at the site of an Amtrak derailment in north-central Montana that killed three people and left seven hospitalized Sunday, officials said.

The westbound Empire Builder was en route from Chicago to Seattle when it left the tracks about 4 p.m. Saturday near Joplin, a town of about 200.

Trevor Fossen was first on the scene. The Joplin resident was on a dirt road nearing the tracks Saturday when he saw "a wall of dust" about 300 feet high.

"I started looking at that, wondering what it was and then I saw the train had tipped over and derailed," said Fossen, who called 911 and started trying to get people out. He called his brother to bring ladders for people who couldn't get down after exiting through the windows of cars resting on their sides.

The train was carrying about 141 passengers and 16 crew members and had two locomotives and 10 cars, eight of which derailed, Amtrak spokesman Jason Abrams said.

A 14-member team including investigators and specialists in railroad signals would look into the cause of the derailment on a BNSF Railway main track that involved no other trains or equipment, said NTSB spokesman Eric Weiss.

Law enforcement said the officials from the NTSB, Amtrak and BNSF had arrived at the accident scene just west of Joplin, where the tracks cut through vast, golden brown wheat fields that were recently harvested. Several large cranes were brought to the tracks that run roughly parallel to U.S. Highway 2, along with a truckload of gravel and new railroad ties.

Several rail cars could still be seen on their sides.

The accident scene is about 150 miles (241 kilometers) northeast of Helena and about 30 miles (48 kilometers) from the Canadian border.

Amtrak CEO Bill Flynn expressed condolences to those who lost loved ones and said the company is working with the NTSB, Federal Railroad Administration and local law enforcement, sharing their "sense of urgency" to determine what happened.

US has enough COVID-19 vaccines for boosters, kids' shots

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—With more than 40 million doses of coronavirus vaccines available, U.S. health authorities said they're confident there will be enough for both qualified older Americans seeking booster shots and the young children for whom initial vaccines are expected to be approved in the not-too-distant future.

The spike in demand—expected following last week's federal recommendation on booster shots—would be the first significant jump in months. More than 70 million Americans remain unvaccinated despite the enticement of lottery prizes, free food or gifts and pleas from exhausted health care workers as the average number of deaths per day climbed to more than 1,900 in recent weeks.

Federal and state health authorities said current supply and steady production of more doses can easily accommodate those seeking boosters or initial vaccination, avoiding a repeat of the frustratingly slow rollout of COVID-19 vaccines across the country early this year.

"I hope that we have the level of interest in the booster ... that we need more vaccines," Colorado Gov. Jared Polis said Tuesday. "That's simply not where we are today. We have plenty of vaccines."

Robust supply in the U.S enabled President Joe Biden this week to promise an additional 500 million of Pfizer's COVID-19 shots to share with the world, doubling the United States' global contribution. Aid groups and health organizations have pushed the U.S. and other countries to improve vaccine access in countries where even the most vulnerable people haven't had a shot.

Among the challenges states face is not ordering too many doses and letting them go to waste. Several states with low vaccination rates, including Idaho and Kansas, have reported throwing away thousands of expired doses or are struggling to use vaccines nearing expiration this fall.

ACROSS THE NATION

Friends, family flock to Long Island to mourn Gabby Petito

HOLBROOK, N.Y. (AP)—Lines of mourners paid their respects Sunday for Gabby Petito, the 22-year-old whose death on a cross-country trip has sparked a manhunt for her boyfriend. Among those who congregated in Holbrook, about 35 miles (56 kilometers) east of New York City, were family members, friends, coworkers and people who were touched by Petito's story even though they didn't know her. "She was a beautiful soul; she was full of life, always smiling," said Desiree Keeffe, a friend of Petito's mother, Nicole. "She gave you love. She was just a beautiful soul. She touched everybody like she did now." Two fire trucks were positioned one on either side of the funeral home, each with its ladder extended, and a line of firefighters was seen filing into the building. Across the street, a chain link fence was adorned with posters featuring Petito's image and messages such as, "She touched the world." Petito was reported missing Sept. 11 by her parents after she didn't respond to calls and texts for several days while she and Brian Laundrie visited parks in the West.

Pelosi vows to pass $1T bill, move ahead on larger measure

WASHINGTON (AP)—With President Joe Biden's broad domestic agenda at risk of collapse, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Sunday vowed that Democrats will pass a bipartisan infrastructure bill this week and push ahead on the bigger $3.5 trillion social safety net and climate change bill while acknowledging the total amount will drop. Biden spoke with lawmakers over the weekend on the path forward, according to a White House official who requested anonymity to discuss the private conversations. Extensive work was being done behind the scenes to shore up support. When asked Sunday if Pelosi had the votes to pass the $1 trillion infrastructure bill, Biden told reporters at the White House, "It's going to take the better part of this week." Pelosi had originally pledged to House moderates a vote on the infrastructure legislation by Monday, but she said Sunday in a letter to colleagues that vote will now be Thursday. With Democratic divisions, the extra time allowed space for negotiations on the broader bill, so both bills could advance. The $1 trillion infrastructure plan passed the Senate last month.

6 improving at Tennessee hospital after grocery shooting

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Six people wounded in a mass shooting at a Tennessee supermarket are no longer in critical condition, a hospital spokeswoman said Sunday. One person was in serious condition and five others were in good condition, Angie Golding, a spokeswoman for Regional One Health in Memphis, told news outlets. On Thursday, a gunman killed one person and himself and wounded 14 others at a Kroger in Collierville, an upscale suburb 30 miles (50 kilometers) east of Memphis. The victims included 10 employees and five customers, police said. Police identified the gunman as UK Thang. He worked in a sushi business at the store and was the son of refugees from Myanmar who had settled in Nashville, according to Aung Kyaw, a family friend. The Collierville store remains closed.

Asia

Sanae Takaichi, left, and Seiko Noda, right, both former internal affairs ministers and candidates for the presidential election of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, attend a debate session held by Japan National Press club Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021 in Tokyo. AP

2 women vie for Japan PM

TOKYO (AP)—The inclusion of two women among the four candidates vying to become the next prime minister seems like a big step forward for Japan's notoriously sexist politics. But their fate is in the hands of a conservative, mostly male governing party—and the leading female candidate has been criticized by observers for her right-wing gender policies.

Sanae Takaichi and Seiko Noda are the first women in 13 years seeking the leadership of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party in an election Wednesday. The winner is certain to become the next prime minister because of a parliamentary majority held by the LDP and its coalition partner.

While both are LDP members, they are political opposites in many ways. The ultra-conservative Takaichi advocates a kind of paternalistic nationalism and a stronger military, while the liberal-leaning, pacifist Noda supports women's advancement and sexual diversity.

"As tiny minorities in Japanese politics, women have limited choices to survive and succeed; they can confront the boys' club politics or they can be loyal to them," said Mayumi Taniguchi, an expert on women's roles in society and politics at the Osaka University of Arts.

Takaichi apparently chose loyalty while Noda appears to work outside the mainstream but without being confrontational, Taniguchi said. "They are quite different."

In the race to pick a successor to outgoing Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, the women are competing against vaccinations minister Taro Kono and former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida. Kono and Kishida are considered the top candidates; both are from well-known political families and belong to powerful party factions.

But Takaichi is seen by some as a fast-rising candidate, with the crucial backing of former leader Shinzo Abe, whose arch-conservative vision she supports. The latest media surveys of party lawmakers show she is beginning to rake in support from party conservatives, while Noda remains firmly in fourth place.

S. Korea urges North to restore hotlines

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea on Sunday urged North Korea to restore dormant communication hotlines, a day after the North repeated an offer to open conditional talks.

The North might be seeking to extract concessions about two weeks after it raised tensions by carrying out its first missile tests in six months. North Korea has twice reached out to South Korea saying it's open to talks if conditions are met.

Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, said Saturday the two Koreas can take steps toward reconciliation if South Korea abandons "hostile polices" and "double-dealing standards."

She didn't elaborate on what specific steps she wants South Korea to take. But some experts say North Korea wants South Korea to play a role in winning relief from U.S.-led sanctions, getting aid, or receiving other concessions such as international recognition as a nuclear weapons state.

On Sunday, South Korea's Unification Ministry called Kim Yo Jong's statement "meaningful," saying the South has been consistently pushing to achieve denuclearization and peace on the Korean Peninsula through dialogue.

To hold talks on beginning steps toward reconciliation, a ministry statement said that suspended cross-border communication lines must be reactivated quickly to promote stable communications between the divided countries. It said Seoul hopes the two Koreas can resume talks on many pending issues.

Cyclone floods parts of India's east coast, knocks out power

HYDERABAD, India (AP)—A cyclone flooded parts of India's eastern coast with heavy rains and uprooted thousands of trees and power poles, knocking out electricity, before weakening to a deep depression Monday.

Heavy rains lashed the town of Kalingapatnam in Andhra Pradesh state on Sunday, swamping roads and marooning hundreds of villages, local official Shrikesh Lathkar said.

One fisherman was missing and another was injured when their boat was hit by the high tide, but no deaths have been reported from the storm.

Authorities in two coastal states had been on high alert as the cyclone with sustained winds blowing up to 85 kilometers per hour (53 mph) hit the eastern seaboard late Sunday evening. National Disaster Response Force teams were deployed to the eastern state of Odisha and the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, where thousands of people were evacuated.

World

Social Democrats narrowly beat Merkel's bloc in German election

BERLIN (AP)—Germany's center-left Social Democrats won the biggest share of the vote in a national election Sunday, narrowly beating outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel 's center-right Union bloc in a closely fought race that will determine who succeeds the long-time leader at the helm of Europe's biggest economy.

The Social Democrats' candidate Olaf Scholz, the outgoing vice chancellor and finance minister who pulled his party out of a years-long slump, said the outcome was "a very clear mandate to ensure now that we put together a good, pragmatic government for Germany."

Despite getting its worst-ever result in a federal contest, the Union bloc said it too would reach out to smaller parties to discuss forming a government, while Merkel stays on in a caretaker role until a successor is sworn in.

Election officials said early Monday that a count of all 299 constituencies showed the Social Democrats received 25.9% of the vote, ahead of 24.1% for the Union bloc. No winning party in a German national election had previously taken less than 31% of the vote.

Armin Laschet, the governor of North Rhine-Westphalia state who outmaneuvered a more popular rival to secure the nomination of Merkel's Union bloc, had struggled to motivate the party's base and suffered a series of missteps.

"Of course, this is a loss of votes that isn't pretty," Laschet said of results that looked set to undercut by some measure the Union's previous worst showing of 31% in 1949. But he added that with Merkel departing after 16 years in power, "no one had an incumbent bonus in this election."

Laschet told supporters that "we will do everything we can to form a government under the Union's leadership, because Germany now needs a coalition for the future that modernizes our country."

Both Laschet and Scholz will be courting the same two parties: the environmentalist Greens, who were third with 14.8%; and the pro-business Free Democrats, who took 11.5% of the vote.

The Greens traditionally lean toward the Social Democrats and the Free Democrats toward the Union, but neither ruled out going the other way.

The other option was a repeat of the outgoing "grand coalition" of the Union and Social Democrats that has run Germany for 12 of Merkel's 16 years in power, but there was little obvious appetite for that after years of government squabbling.

"Everyone thinks that ... this 'grand coalition' isn't promising for the future, regardless of who is No. 1 and No. 2," Laschet said. "We need a real new beginning."

The Free Democrats' leader, Christian Lindner, appeared keen to govern, suggesting that his party and the Greens should make the first move.

WORLD BRIEFS

Swiss approve same-sex marriage by wide margin in referendum

GENEVA (AP)—Cheers rang out, hugs were exchanged and rainbow-colored flags waved overhead across Switzerland as the Swiss resoundingly voted to allow same-sex couples to marry, final results of a nationwide referendum showed Sunday. Official results showed the measure passed with 64.1% of the vote while more than half of all voters approved in each of Switzerland's 26 cantons, or states. The vote - years in the making - is set to bring the Alpine nation into line with many others in western Europe and wraps up an often tense campaign between rival sides. Justice Minister Karin Keller-Sutter tweeted that the government will implement the decision quickly and, under current plans, the new rules can take effect on July 1. Switzerland's parliament and the governing Federal Council—on which she sits—had supported the "Marriage for All" measure, which marks a key step for greater rights for gays and lesbians in Switzerland. The country has authorized same-sex civil partnerships since 2007.

Israeli troops kill 5 Palestinians in West Bank gun battles

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli troops conducted a series of arrest raids against suspected Hamas militants across the occupied West Bank early Sunday, sparking a pair of gun battles in which five Palestinians were killed and two Israeli soldiers were seriously wounded. It was the deadliest violence between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants in the West Bank in several weeks. The region has seen an increase in fighting in recent months, with tensions fueled by Israeli settlement construction, heightened militant activity in the northern West Bank and the aftermath of a bloody war between Israel and Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip last May. The Israeli military said it had been tracking the Hamas militants for several weeks and that the raids were launched in response to immediate threats.

San Marino voters overwhelmingly back legal abortion

SAN MARINO (AP)—San Marino residents on Sunday voted overwhelmingly to legalize abortion, rejecting a 150-year-old law that had criminalized it and making the tiny republic the latest majority Catholic state to approve the procedure under certain circumstances. Some 77% of voters approved a referendum proposal calling for abortion to be legal in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, according to official returns broadcast on San Marino RTV. Abortion would also be legal beyond that point if the woman's life is in danger or if her physical or psychological health is at risk because of fetal anomalies or malformations. With the "yes" votes winning, San Marino's Parliament must now draft a bill to legalize the procedure. Turnout for the referendum was 41% in the microstate of 33,000 people surrounded by Italy.

Rowdy celebrations erupt in Norway as COVID restrictions end

HELSINKI (AP)—Police in Norway on Sunday reported dozens of disturbances and violent clashes including mass brawls in the Nordic country's big cities after streets, bars, restaurants and nightclubs were filled with people celebrating the end of COVID-19 restrictions that lasted for more than a year. The Norwegian government abruptly announced Friday that most of the remaining coronavirus restrictions would be scrapped beginning Saturday and that life in the nation of 5.3 million would return to normal. The unexpected announcement by outgoing Prime Minister Erna Solberg to drop coronavirus restrictions the next day took many Norwegians by surprise and led to chaotic scenes in the capital, Oslo, and elsewhere in the country. "It has been 561 days since we introduced the toughest measures in Norway in peacetime," Solberg said on Friday at a news conference. "Now the time has come to return to a normal daily life."

Overdrive

TOYOTA INTRODUCES A COROLLA CROSSOVER SUV FOR 2022

By LARRY PRINTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Popular taste is a fickle thing. One minute the world loves you, the next they never knew you existed. Madonna was queen of the pop world until her place was usurped by Lady Gaga. Madonna is still very popular, no doubt. But neither are as popular as, say, Cher. Some pop artists are immortal.

The same could be said of the Toyota Corolla. This is a car that has sold more than 50 million units in 55 years. Let's face it, whatever may happen in the world, there's always a Corolla: affordable, sensibly styled, fuel efficient and reliable. Exciting? Occasionally, but not often. That's not its raison d'etre, unlike Cher. But in its longevity, it's every bit the Cher of the car world, having debuted around the same time.

It's a survivor. Do you believe in life after love? The Corolla does.

But as the world has gone crazy for crossovers, and sedan sales slump, Toyota is trying to maintain its franchise's relevance. First came a revival of the Corolla hatchback, a throwback to the 1980s minus the rear-wheel drive and hotter performance. It helped, but not as much as what's debuting now: the 2022 Toyota Corolla Cross.

That's right. A Corolla crossover.

Styled and engineered in Japan, and built in Huntsville, Ala., the Corolla Cross fits between the C-HR and RAV4 in the Toyota lineup. Given the C-HR's entry-level pricing, you'd think it would be more popular than a cold beer in July, and certainly it has its audience, selling 42,936 copies in 2020. But the RAV4 is far more popular, selling 430,387 units in the same period. Surely, the C-HR's Kabuki mask styling and cramped interior prevent it from being more popular. It's just not mainstream enough. This is what the 2022 Corolla Cross is meant to address.

The Corolla Cross's soft exterior form, tall roof and bold grille are far more restrained than either of the crossovers that bracket it in the lineup. Its conservative demeanor is refreshing, a welcome breath of fresh air from a company trying too hard to prove it's sporty and relevant. Its look is exquisite French vanilla, the sort of vehicle Toyota wasn't ashamed to produce.

It's as if they turned back time—but not totally.

Climb behind the wheel of the XLE model, and you'll find an instrument panel cribbed from its sister ship, and this isn't a bad thing. Feeling neither cheap nor sparse, its color and shrewd material choices conjure a premium feel. An 8-inch infotainment touchscreen (7-inch on L and LE trims) anchors the center of the instrument panel, and is placed above a simple row of climate control buttons bookended by rotary knobs. The instrument panel is covered in a synthetic material accented with simple accents that suggests extravagant modernism. This is mass market design at its finest, and feels more natural in the Corolla Cross than in the Corolla sedan.

NUTS & BOLTS

2022 Toyota Corolla Cross

- **Base price:** $22,195
- **Engine:** Turbocharged DOHC 2.0-liter four-cylinder
- **Horsepower/Torque:** 169/150 pound-feet
- **EPA fuel economy (city/highway):** 29/32 mpg
- **Observed fuel economy:** 00 mpg
- **Fuel required:** 87 Octane
- **Length/Width/Height:** 175.6/71.9/67.2 inches
- **Ground clearance:** 8.2 inches
- **Cargo capacity:** 24.6-66.5 cubic feet
- **Towing capacity:** 1,500 pounds

As you'd expect, the Corolla Cross's interior is comfortable and quiet. Front seat legroom is generous, rear seat space is adequate, and the cargo hold is generous. The easy-to-use infotainment screen comes with Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and Amazon Alexa. USB ports are numerous, and an onboard Wi-Fi hotspot is available as part of Toyota's wireless telematics service.

When it comes time to drive, you'll find something familiar under the hood: Toyota's turbocharged 2.0-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine, rated at 169 horsepower and 150 pound-feet of torque. It's matched to a continuously variable transmission fitted with a conventional first gear to improve performance off the line. Front-wheel drive is standard; all-wheel drive is a $1,300 premium. Towing is rated at 1,500 pounds. And it comes with the requisite driver-assistance safety systems. But there's one more thing to consider: Front-wheel-drive models get a live rear axle, and all-wheel-drive trims get an independent rear suspension, and this makes a noticeable difference.

Opt for the front driver and you'll find handling is decent, safely scrubbing off speed when you take on a too-challenging corner. Obviously, this is no sports car; it's a suburban schlepper, one that's more than up to the task. By contrast, all-wheel drive and an independent suspension transform its handling, feeling far more precise, and allowing the driver to indulge their inner Andretti. Push hard enough and the tail starts to get twitchy. The driveline has adequate power, although manual shifting helps maintain the power band when you need it, such as when you're driving uphill. That's when engine power is marginal. Floor the pedal, and you'll find the engine moans but there's little power. Towing on hills would make it even worse. But for those who have driven Corollas before, this won't come as a surprise. In fact, it might even endear the Corolla Cross to them; it will feel familiar.

The new Corolla Cross goes on sale in October, and officials are expecting demand to be strong. While they wouldn't commit to how many they expect to sell, it wouldn't be surprising if this version of the Corolla quickly becomes its top seller worldwide.

For those who love sedans, that may be bad news, but for the rest of us, the beat goes on.

Michigan to have nation's first electrified road to wirelessly charge EVs, governor says

By ERIC D. LAWRENCE
DETROIT FREE PRESS

Imagine being able to charge an electric vehicle without stopping to plug in. It's the kind of technology that could help ease worries like range anxiety and could really boost the transition to electric vehicles.

Michigan could have the first wireless charging infrastructure on a public road anywhere in the country, although the state is likely to be challenged to meet that goal because Indiana is already preparing to test such technology.

It's the idea behind a new initiative that Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced Tuesday morning as she helped open Motor Bella, this year's alternative for the North American International Auto Show being held this week at the M1 Concourse in Pontiac.

A one-mile stretch of road somewhere in Wayne, Oakland or Macomb counties will be picked to host the Inductive Vehicle Charging Pilot. The Michigan Department of Transportation is planning to issue a request for proposal on Sept. 28. It's not clear how the technology would work, how soon the pilot project would be operational or how much it might cost, although this type of advance has been discussed by experts as one possible future for EV charging and testing has been tried in Europe.

The Indiana project would use magnetizable concrete to enable wireless charging of electric vehicles, according to an Indiana Department of Transportation news release.

Scott Manning, an INDOT spokesman, said the in-pavement wireless charging project in that state was launched in July, and is currently being installed at a research facility in West Lafayette, Indiana.

"We expect to reach the second phase of the project, testing on a public roadway within one to two years," Manning said, noting that officials there were not aware of any other similar projects under way in the United States when they were researching it.

When asked about Indiana's project, Shelby Austin, a public relations official helping with the Whitmer announcement, said Michigan's request for proposal would effectively jump ahead of Indiana's plans, directly to the public road phase.

Following her announcement Tuesday, Whitmer noted the significance for this type of project.

"We're rebuilding infrastructure in Michigan. Orange barrels are everywhere. It's important that we're rebuilding, but we're doing it in a resilient way that supports advanced technology," Whitmer told reporters, noting that the wireless charging project is crucial to meeting the needs of fleets.

In a statement later, Whitmer pointed to Michigan's past as well as its future.

"Michigan was home to the first mile of paved road, and now we're paving the way for the roads of tomorrow with innovative infrastructure (that) will support the economy and the environment, helping us achieve our goal of carbon neutrality by 2050," Whitmer said.

The potential to charge electric buses, shuttles and other vehicles on the road without having to stop could do more than just help with electric vehicle deployment, according to Trevor Pawl, chief mobility officer with the state's Office of Future Mobility and Electrification.

"This electrified roadway has the potential to accelerate autonomous vehicles at scale and turn our streets into safe, sustainable, accessible and shared transportation platforms," Pawl said in a news release.

Life & Style

‘Moulin Rouge! The Musical’ sashays home with 10 Tony Awards

NEW YORK (AP)—”Moulin Rouge! The Musical,” a jukebox adaptation of Baz Luhrmann’s hyperactive 2001 movie, won the best new musical crown at the Tony Awards on a Sunday night when Broadway looked back to honor shows shuttered by COVID-19, mourn its fallen and also look forward to welcoming audiences again.

The show about the goings-on in a turn-of-the-century Parisian nightclub, updated with tunes like “Single Ladies” and “Firework” alongside the big hit “Lady Marmalade,” won 10 Tonys. The record is 12, won by “The Producers.”

Producer Carmen Pavlovic struck a philosophical note in her acceptance speech, sharing the award with all the shows that struggled in the past 18-month shutdown.

This image released by Boneau/Bryan-Brown shows the cast in “Moulin Rouge! The Musical.” MATTHEW MURPHY/BONEAU/BRYAN-BROWN VIA AP

“It feels a little odd to me to be talking about one show as best musical. I feel that every show of last season deserves to be thought of as the best musical,” she said. “The shows that opened, the shows that closed not to return, the shows that nearly opened. And of course, the shows that paused and are fortunate enough to be reborn—best musical is all of those shows.”

“The Inheritance” by Matthew Lopez was named the best new play and won three other awards, and Charles Fuller’s “A Soldier’s Play” won best play revival and an acting award.

Lopez’s two-part, seven-hour epic uses “Howards End” as a starting point for a play that looks at gay life in the early 21st century. It also yielded wins for Andrew Burnap as best actor in a play, Stephen Daldry as best director, and Lois Smith as best performance by an actress in a featured role in a play.

Thomas Kirdahy, a producer, dedicated the award to his late husband, the playwright Terrence McNally. Lopez, the first Latin writer to win in the category, urged more plays to be produced from the Latin community. “We have so many stories inside us aching to come out. Let us tell you our stories,” he said.

The pandemic-delayed telecast kicked off with an energetic performance of “You Can’t Stop the Beat” from original Broadway cast members of “Hairspray!” Ali Stroker sang “What I Did for Love” from “A Chorus Line.” Jennifer Holliday also took the stage to deliver an unforgettable rendition of “And I’m Telling You I’m Not Going” from the musical “Dreamgirls.”

The singers performed for a masked and appreciative audience at a packed Winter Garden Theatre. Host Audra McDonald got a standing ovation when she took the stage. “You can’t stop the beat. The heart of New York City!” she said.

“Moulin Rouge! The Musical” won for scenic design, costume, lighting, sound design, orchestrations and a featured acting Tony for Broadway favorite Danny Burstein. Sonya Tayeh won for choreography in her Broadway debut, and Alex Timbers won the trophy for best direction of a musical.

‘Dear Evan Hansen’ opens 2nd to ‘Shang-Chi’ at box office

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP FILM WRITER

“Dear Evan Hansen” may have been a hit on Broadway, but the filmed adaptation of the Tony-winning show is off to a slow start at the box office in its first weekend in theaters. The Universal musical that’s playing exclusively in theaters grossed an estimated $7.5 million from 3,364 locations, according to studio estimates on Sunday.

First place again went to Disney and Marvel’s “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings,” which added $13.3 million in ticket sales in North America, bringing its domestic total to $196.5 million. The superhero pic has topped the charts for four consecutive weekends and this weekend surpassed “Black Widow” to become the highest domestic earner of the pandemic.

With little in the way of high-profile competition this weekend, “Dear Evan Hansen’s” $7.3 million was enough to land it in second place. While critics were less than impressed, audiences that did turn out this weekend were fans and gave it an A- CinemaScore. Women made up an estimated 62% of the audience according to exit polls. Directed by Stephen Chbosky and written by Steven Levenson, “Dear Evan Hansen” is about a high school student with social anxiety disorder.

“We are tremendously proud of ‘Dear Evan Hansen’ and everything about it,” said Universal’s head of distribution Jim Orr. “With an exceptional film and great audience scores, we think that’ll lead to a better than normal run at the domestic box office.”

Despite its prestigious pedigree and star-studded cast including Julianne Moore and Amy Adams, “Dear Evan Hansen” has become somewhat of a punching bag on social media since its premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival earlier this month. At the heart of the jokes is the fact that the film has a 27-year-old Ben Platt, who originated the role, playing a teenager.

“Musicals have always had mixed results at the box office,” said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. “It’s really difficult to pin down and project what a musical might earn on opening weekend, especially in this marketplace.”

Earlier this year, the adaptation of Lin-Manuel Miranda’s “In the Heights” underwhelmed at the box office despite stellar reviews—but it was also streaming on HBO Max simultaneously.

The single-digit opening weekend of “Dear Evan Hansen” remindedsome of “Cats” which opened to $6.6 million in December 2019. But “Dear Evan Hansen” cost significantly less—$28 million vs. $95 million—in addition to the fact that “Cats” launched to worse reviews in a pre-pandemic environment.

“‘Cats’ is a completely different movie released in a completely different marketplace. I don’t think comparisons are necessarily fair,” Dergarabedian said. “It’s more about the audience making a choice.”

Reader says Abby came down too hard on friend’s mistake

DEAR ABBY: I took exception to your response to “Former Friend in Oregon” (July 1), who vaped marijuana while visiting a friend in the presence of the friend’s 12-year-old future stepdaughter. The friend made a mistake, for which she apologized profusely. She had flown cross-country to visit her pregnant best friend, no small thing. Flying can cause both anxiety and nausea, and the woman said she uses vaping to relieve both of those issues. Further, it was legal in that state.

Pregnancy can cause hormones to be out of whack, and the pregnant friend might have been more emotional and reactive than usual. “Former Friend” stated she did not have experience with children. If her judgment was poor, she apologized for it and didn’t try to minimize it. I truly believe she should be forgiven and that one mistake should not end the entire friendship.

This incident could have been a teaching tool for the child, referencing bad judgment, forgiveness, value of friendship, etc. Friendships are vitally important. I could not have navigated what life has thrown at me without the support of close friends. A friend who travels far to visit her bestie should not be discarded over one error in judgment, especially when she so willingly apologized.

FORGIVING IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR FORGIVING: That letter drew a huge response from readers, many of whom expressed similar feelings to yours. They pointed out that marijuana is becoming increasingly legal and normal in our society, and it is a topic that should be openly discussed with the 12-year-old. They also felt the girl probably knows more about drugs than the two women do. (She asked her future stepmom, “Was she smoking weed?”) Consensus was universal that “Former Friend” may have committed a faux pas, but NOT an unforgivable one, and I should not have been so hard-nosed.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I was married in a double wedding with my twin brother. Fast-forward: My husband and I will celebrate our 25th anniversary in three months. My brother and his wife divorced 10 years ago. Our three adult children want us to have a big anniversary celebration, as do my husband and I. My brother says that since it would have been his anniversary too, I’m being selfish and insensitive to his feelings. Our mother agrees! Both said if we have a party, they will not attend.

I think they are the ones being selfish. My husband and I have had our share of hardships, but we worked and talked through them. I feel we deserve this celebration not only for us, but also our kids and friends. Your thoughts?

SILVER ANNIVERSARY IN ARIZONA

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

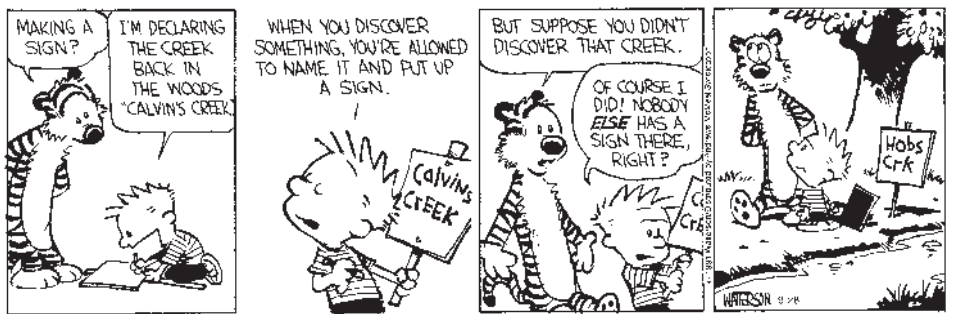
DEAR SILVER: You are neither selfish nor insensitive. Celebrate your 25th anniversary (congratulations, by the way) in any fashion or at any time you and your family choose. It is regrettable that your self-centered twin brother and overly indulgent mother adopted the attitude they have and attempted to make the occasion all about him, but the choice was theirs. Graciously accept their refusal to attend, have the party and enjoy every minute of it.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order “How to Be Popular.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


MAKING A SIGN?
I'M DECLARING THE CREEK BACK IN THE WOODS "CALVIN'S CREEK."
WHEN YOU DISCOVER SOMETHING, YOU'RE ALLOWED TO NAME IT AND PUT UP A SIGN.
CALVIN'S CREEK
BUT SUPPOSE YOU DIDN'T DISCOVER THAT CREEK.
OF COURSE I DID! NOBODY ELSE HAS A SIGN THERE, RIGHT?
HOBS CRK
WATERSON

Garfield®

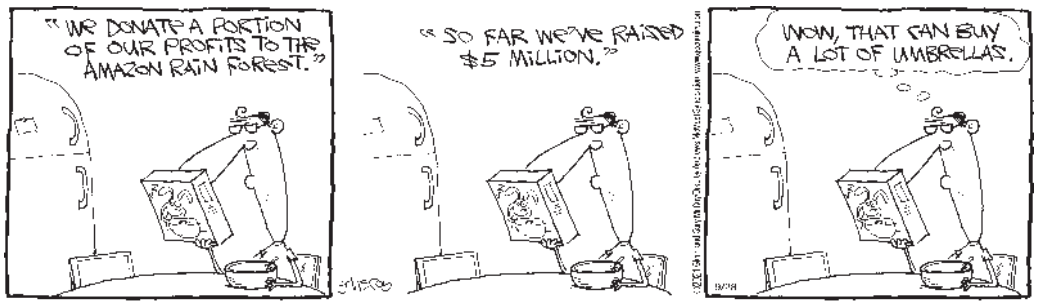
By Jim Davis

Adam@Home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


"WE DONATE A PORTION OF OUR PROFITS TO THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST."
"SO FAR WE'VE RAISED $5 MILLION."
WOW, THAT CAN BUY A LOT OF UMBRELLAS.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Regrets
5 Part of LGBTQ
8 Country singer Evans
12 Recedes
13 Exploit
14 Novelist Jennifer
15 "Patriot Games" actor
17 Aviation prefix
18 Attempt
19 MSN, for one
20 "Peer Gynt" playwright
21 Perched
22 Supporting
23 Ladybug features
26 Beginning
30 Seize
31 Designer Claiborne
32 Summers in Paris
33 Pledge drive gift
35 Sky blue
36 Singer Orbison
37 "Hail!"
38 Big Apple borough
41 Hearty quaff
42 "I love," in Latin
45 Sitar music
46 Food court stand
48 Always
49 Religious sch.
50 Writer Wiesel
51 Conked out
52 Pair
53 Jewels

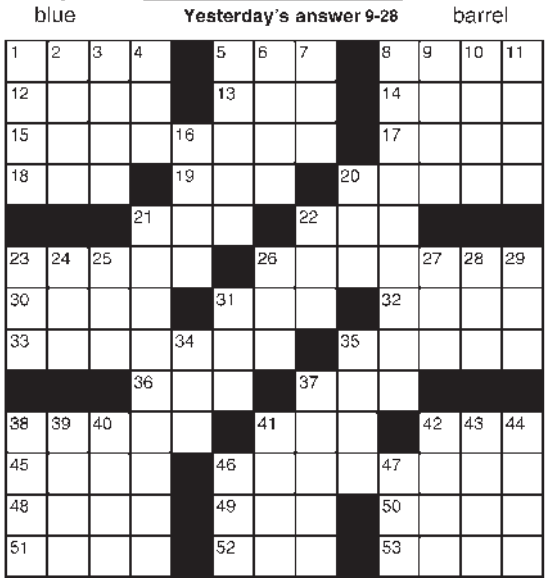
DOWN

1 Take five
2 Modern taxi rival
3 Online auction site
4 Tax form ID
5 Invitee
6 Pronto
7 Longing
8 Summer cooler
9 Mellows
10 Scarce
11 Unsigned (Abbr.)
16 Prejudice
20 Charged bit
21 Mountain rescue dog
22 City in Morocco
23 Boot camp VIP
24 Expert
25 Granola grain
26 Showbiz job
27 R-V link
28 Suffix with cash
29 Compass dir.
31 Non-clerical
34 Jury enclosure
35 With (Fr.)
37 Texas landmark
38 Raised
39 Sitarist Shankar
40 Curved molding
41 Fresh
42 Competent
43 Hurt severely
44 Raw materials
46 Concorde, e.g.
47 Small barrel

Solution time: 22 mins.

M	T	V			A	C	E		M	A	R	A
O	R	E	I		B	O	X		A	R	O	N
R	A	T	F		C	P	A		K	I	W	
K	Y	O	T	O		A	C	M	F			
			S	U	M		T	R	I	B	A	L
S	A	N	G	R	I	A		S	T	O	L	
A	G	E	E		A	R	F		S	N	I	P
	R	A	T	E		C	O	R	N	E	T	S
L	A	R	G	E	R		B	O	A			
			C	L	A	F		O	P	A	L	S
H	O	P	I		D	E	N		P	R	E	P
E	R	I	N		A	M	O		Y	E	A	R
H	O	N	G		R	A	G			S	K	Y

Yesterday's answer 9-28



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Hilary Duff, 34; Ranbir Kapoor, 39; Mira Sorvino, 54; Janeane Garofalo, 57.

Happy Birthday: Plunge into opportunities without hesitation, and learn all you can as you strive to be at the top of your game. Impress those around you with your stamina and undying desire to make a difference to the causes you believe in and the people you love. Mark your destinations. Proceed with enthusiasm, an open mind and hope for a better future. Your numbers are 5, 19, 23, 28, 32, 36, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Target what you want to accomplish, and don't stop until you reach your destination. Falling short will lead to criticism or an emotional scene that will leave you feeling down. Don't overreact; take the initiative, and set out to achieve your goal. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Get together with someone who boosts your morale and encourages you to follow your heart. A change of plans will play in your favor by allowing you to do something you've been putting off. Enjoy and live in the moment. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Emotional spending won't make you feel better. Use your knowledge and intelligence to help you make better decisions that will encourage you to earn and save more. Be open to suggestions, but in the end, do what works best for you. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Say little, do a lot. What you accomplish will be what makes a difference. Change your outlook to help overcome any adversity you face or trouble someone causes. Anger will solve nothing, but actions will speak louder than words. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Minimize health risks. Avoid crowded events, groups or activities, regardless of who is attending. Spend more time with close friends and family who look out for your best interests. Refuse to let a job or domestic change disrupt your plans. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Make adjustments to how you deal with friends and relatives. Be ready to compromise if necessary, but don't give in to emotional blackmail. Try to enforce equality and fair play, and you will come out on top. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Don't give up; see what you can do, push the envelope and make your dreams come true. Show passion in all that you do, and you will surpass your expectations and gain respect and support as you move forward. Avoid overspending. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Emotional spending will leave you without money. Generate a system that makes good sense and is financially smart. Knowing where your money is going will make you feel better about your future and eager to plan and set new goals. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Take care of all the details yourself, and you will not be disappointed in the outcome. Speak up and position yourself for advancement. A diligent yet unique approach to how you earn your living will fetch the results you desire. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* An emotional incident will make you look bad if you are insensitive. Take a moment to put yourself in someone's shoes before you say something you regret. A positive attitude at home and work will get better results. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Think twice before spending on something you don't need. Organize your bills, and reconcile your bank account. Knowing where you stand financially will bring you peace of mind and allow you to plan for things you want to pursue. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Follow your heart, do something creative and fix up your space. Do whatever it takes to ease stress. Make yourself comfortable, and set goals that encourage happiness and peace of mind. Commit to someone you love, and work as a team player. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are outgoing, entertaining and chatty. You are curious and adaptable.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	4	5			3	2	9	
		8	5	1		7		
2								8
4							8	
	1						5	
	8							3
6								1
		1		4	7	3		
	5	2	3			4	6	

Difficulty Level ★★ 9/28

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

9	7	6	3	8	5	2	4	1
4	1	2	6	7	9	3	5	8
3	5	8	1	2	4	7	9	6
6	2	5	9	4	1	8	3	7
7	4	3	8	5	6	9	1	2
8	9	1	7	3	2	4	6	5
2	3	4	5	1	7	6	8	9
1	8	9	2	6	3	5	7	4
5	6	7	4	9	8	1	2	3

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

A TRIP TO TURKEY — Solution: 6 letters

D	G	E	S	K	I	S	E	H	I	R	U	L	E	N
C	I	A	M	A	R	M	A	R	A	A	S	R	U	B
F	I	Y	Z	A	A	A	K	U	S	K	A	S	Z	U
O	O	L	A	I	A	R	K	L	L	A	M	S	U	L
O	N	Z	B	R	A	U	A	N	P	A	Y	L	T	G
T	A	E	L	U	B	N	A	T	S	I	A	I	Z	A
B	C	E	M	A	P	A	T	I	A	H	L	O	I	R
A	L	Z	V	E	G	E	K	E	S	P	A	U	I	I
L	O	O	E	R	N	A	R	I	P	A	H	S	T	A
L	V	G	E	Y	B	E	K	L	R	C	I	N	K	D
S	H	E	O	A	B	R	M	Z	K	K	I	A	O	A
A	C	L	K	R	U	E	T	I	S	S	D	T	N	N
E	A	I	R	T	U	C	K	N	R	W	A	A	Y	A
S	E	N	I	C	M	E	L	E	R	A	G	O	A	A
S	B	A	B	E	K	P	M	D	E	L	I	G	H	T

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Adana, Asia, Bazaars, Beach, Bulgaria, Bursa, City, Dagi, Delight, Denizli, Diyarbakir, Eskisehir, Euro, Ezogelin, Football, Gaziantep, Goat, Greece, Halay, Icmeler, Istanbul, Iztuzu, Kabak, Kebabs, Kisir, Konya, Laws, Marmara, Menemen, Mersin, Oils, Ovabuku, Patara, Recep, Republic, Rule, Saksuka, Samsun, Seas, Site, Small, Tulip, Turkish, Volcano, Zeybek

Yesterday's Answer: Caribbean

To purchase THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 47 through 62 order on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Tucker's 66-yarder sets record, gives Ravens win at Detroit

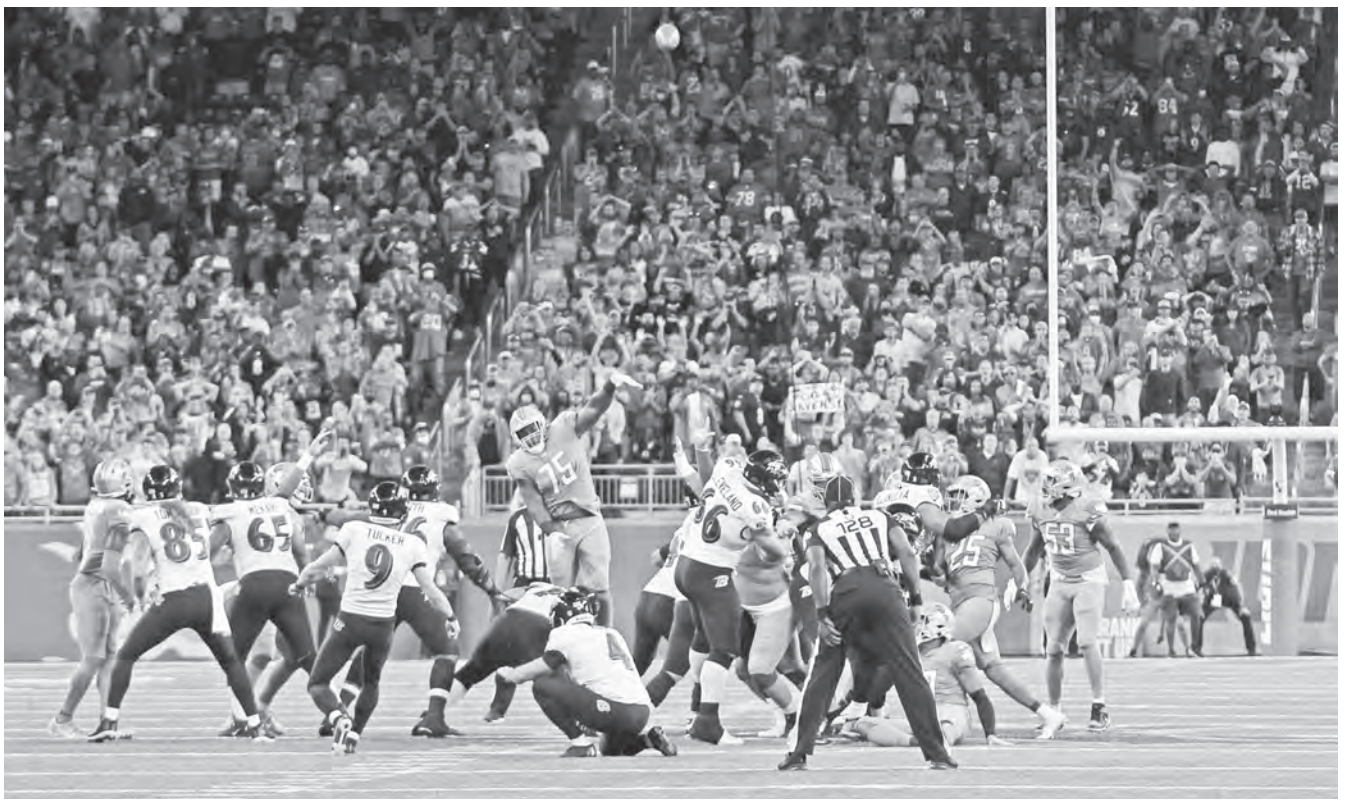
DETROIT (AP)—Justin Tucker set an NFL record with a 66-yard field goal, bouncing it through off the crossbar as time expired to lift the Baltimore Ravens to a 19-17 win over the Detroit Lions on Sunday.

The kick topped the 64-yard field goal Matt Prater made for Denver against Tennessee on Dec. 8, 2013.

Lamar Jackson threw a 36-yard pass to Sammy Watkins on fourth-and-19 to get the Ravens across midfield with 7 seconds left. The superstar quarterback spiked the ball and threw it away on the next two snaps. Then Tucker who made a 61-yard kick to beat the Lions in Baltimore's previous visit to Detroit eight years ago—came out and made the record-breaking attempt.

Baltimore (2-1) went into the fourth quarter with a 16-7 lead and ended up trailing in the final minute.

Ryan Santoso made a go-ahead, 35-yard field goal with 1:04 left, giving coach Dan Campbell an opportunity to win his first game with the Lions (0-3). Santoso was promoted from Detroit's practice squad on Saturday after kicker Austin Seibert went on the COVID-19 reserve list.



Baltimore Ravens kicker Justin Tucker (9) kicks a 66-yard field goal in the second half of an NFL football game against the Detroit Lions in Detroit, Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021. Baltimore won 19-17. AP

Chargers 30, Chiefs 24

In Kansas City, Mo., the Chargers capitalized on four Kansas City turnovers, including Patrick Mahomes' second interception in the closing minutes, and Justin Herbert's touchdown toss to Mike Williams with 32 seconds to go lifted Los Angeles to a victory.

Herbert finished with 281 yards passing and four touchdowns without an interception, outdueling Mahomes in a matchup not only of two of the game's best young quarterbacks but two teams expected to compete for the AFC West title.

The Chargers (2-1) won for the third time in four trips to Kansas City to send the two-time defending conference champion Chiefs (1-2) to the division cellar.

Williams finished with seven catches for 122 yards and two TDs. Austin Ekeler and Keenan Allen also had TD grabs.

Packers 30, 49ers 28

In Santa Clara, Calif., Aaron Rodgers completed two deep passes to Davante Adams on a last-minute drive, setting set up Mason Crosby's 51-yard field goal on the final play of the game that gave Green Bay a win over San Francisco.

Rodgers delivered for the Packers (2-1) after Jimmy Garoppolo gave San Francisco the lead on a 12-yard TD pass to Kyle Juszczyk with 37 seconds to play.

The comeback spoiled the first game for the 49ers (2-1) with fans since beating Green Bay in the 2019 NFC title game. San Francisco had rallied from 17 points down to take the lead before getting crushed by Rodgers.

Saints 28, Patriots 13

In Foxborough, Mass., Jameis Winston threw two touchdown passes, Malcolm Jenkins returned an interception for a score, and New Orleans beat New England.

A week after a career-low passer rating Winston showed better command of the offense, completing 13 of 21 passes for 128 yards. Taysom Hill ran for a touchdown and Alvin Kamara rushed 24 times for 89 yards.

Patriots rookie quarterback Mac Jones entered the day hoping to stretch the field after two games in which the passing attack was mostly underneath. Instead, he found himself under pressure for most of the day and threw three interceptions, two leading to Saints touchdowns. New Orleans (2-1) sacked Jones three times and hit him 11 times. He finished 30 of 51 for 270 yards and a touchdown.

Titans 25, Colts 16

In Nashville, Tenn., Ryan Tannehill threw for 197 yards and three touchdowns and Tennessee held off Indianapolis to grab an early tiebreaker in the AFC South.

The road team had won the previous five games in this division rivalry, but the Titans (2-1) are the defending AFC South champs with a healthy Derrick Henry. The reigning AP NFL Offensive Player of the Year ran for 113 yards, topping the 100-yard mark for a sixth straight division game.

The Colts (0-3) are off to their worst start since 2011. Carson Wentz started after being questionable for Indianapolis with a pair of sprained ankles. He never ran even once, choosing to throw the ball away repeatedly when pressured. He finished with 194 yards passing.

Bills 43, Washington 21

In Orchard Park, N.Y., Josh Allen threw four touchdown passes and scored another TD rushing in Buffalo's rout.

Allen, who had been unhappy with his inconsistencies and 56% completion percentage through two games, finished 32 of 43 for 358 yards, while also surpassing the 100-touchdown plateau (including TDs rushing and one receiving) in his 47th career start.

It marked Allen's fifth career game with four TDs passing and 300 yards passing, one more than the team record held by Hall of Famer Jim Kelly. And Allen's 2-yard TD run in the fourth quarter was his 26th, breaking the franchise record for quarterbacks held by Jack Kemp.

Browns 26, Bears 6

In Cleveland, Myles Garrett recorded a franchise-record 4 1/2 sacks on Justin Fields and Cleveland brought down Chicago's rookie quarterback nine times — holding him to one net yard passing — in his first NFL start.

Garrett had a field day against Fields, who was thrust into the lineup after veteran Andy Dalton injured his knee last week. The Bears (1-2) wanted to be patient and not play the No. 11 overall pick until he was ready.

The Browns (2-1) didn't cut him any breaks, and their defense, which had been criticized for its performances in the first two games, got it together at Fields' expense and held Chicago to only 47 yards and six first downs.

Bengals 24, Steelers 10

In Pittsburgh, Joe Burrow threw for 178 yards and three touchdowns, including two to rookie Ja'Marr Chase, and Cincinnati handled Pittsburgh.

Burrow connected on a 17-yard strike to Tyler Boyd and found Chase for 34-yard and 9-yard scores as the Bengals (2-1) won at Heinz Field for the first time since 2015.

Facing a pass rush missing injured All-Pro linebacker T.J. Watt, Burrow completed 14 of 18 passes, highlighted by the chemistry he and Chase have quickly rekindled since the Bengals selected Burrow's former LSU teammate in the first round of the draft.

Their first touchdown was a beautiful rainbow down the sideline with 37 seconds to go in the first half that ended with Chase simply running past Pittsburgh cornerback James Pierre for the score that put Cincinnati up 14-7 at the break. Their second—in which Burrow had plenty of time to find Chase in the back of the end zone—put the Steelers in a 17-point hole midway through the third quarter from which Pittsburgh (1-2) never threatened to recover.

Falcons 17, Giants 14

In East Rutherford, N.J., Younghoe Koo kicked a 40-yard field goal on the final play for Atlanta to give coach Arthur Smith his first NFL win.

It marked the second straight week the Giants (0-3) lost on the final play of the game.

Matt Ryan hit passes of 28 yards to Cordarrelle Patterson and 25 to rookie tight end Kyle Pitts on the game-winning drive.

Cardinals 31, Jaguars 19

In Jacksonville, Fla., Byron Murphy intercepted two passes, including one he returned for a touchdown following a botched trick play, and Arizona rallied to beat skidding Jacksonville.

The Cardinals improved to 3-0 for the first time since 2015. The Jaguars (0-3) lost their 18th straight game, leaving them eight shy of the NFL record for futility.

This one unraveled late.

Jacksonville led 19-10 after James Robinson's 4-yard touchdown run in the third quarter. Coach Urban Meyer got the spark he had been looking for when Jamal Agnew returned a missed field goal a record-tying 109 yards for a score on the final play of the first half.

But it was all Arizona after Robinson's first score of the season. James Conner capped two long drives with short TD runs, and Murphy delivered the game-changing play when he stepped in front of Jacob Hollister on a flea-flicker and took it the other way for 29 yards.

Raiders 31, Dolphins 28, OT

In Las Vegas, Daniel Carlson's 22-yard field goal as time expired in overtime lifted Las Vegas over Miami.

It marked the second time in the Raiders' first three games—both at home—they overcame a two-touchdown deficit to win in overtime. They also did so against Baltimore in Week 1.

Raiders quarterback Derek Carr found Bryan Edwards for 34 yards before Peyton Barber put together runs of 27 and 8 yards to put Las Vegas (3-0) on the Dolphins' 11-yard line, setting up the winning score.

Carr completed 26 of 43 pass attempts for 386 yards and two touchdowns.

Rams 34, Buccaneers 24

In Inglewood, Calif., Matthew Stafford passed for 343 yards and four touchdowns as he outdueled Tom Brady.

The loss snapped the defending Super Bowl champion Buccaneers' 10-game regular season and playoff winning streak going back to last season.

Stafford was off target on five of his first six attempts before getting in a groove as the Rams (3-0) scored on their next six drives. His best pass of the game came early in the third quarter, when he connected with a wide-open DeSean Jackson for a 75-yard score to extend Los Angeles' lead to 21-7.

Jackson got by Tampa Bay cornerback Carlton Davis III on a go-route, caught it at the Buccaneers 30 and then zig-zagged his way for the final 10 yards and into the tunnel, where he was eventually greeted by Rams coach Sean McVay. It is Jackson's ninth touchdown of at least 75 yards, tying him with Hall of Famer Lance Alworth for the most in the NFL history according to Elias.

Brady threw for 432 yards for Tampa Bay (2-1), joining Drew Brees as the only quarterbacks to throw for more than 80,000.

Vikings 30, Seahawks 17

In Minneapolis, Kirk Cousins threw three touchdown passes before halftime for Minnesota and guided three clock-draining field goal drives after that.

The Vikings beat Seattle for the first time in 12 years.

Alexander Mattison stepped in for the injured Dalvin Cook and racked up 171 total yards, rushing 18 times for 76 yards in the second half as the Vikings (1-2) seized control with 23 straight points. They beat Seattle (1-2) for the first time with Pete Carroll as coach and Russell Wilson as the quarterback.

Broncos 26, Jets 0

In Denver, Von Miller led a Denver defense that sacked Zach Wilson five times, intercepted him twice and limited the rookie to 160 yards passing.

Denver is off to its first 3-0 start in five seasons thanks in part to a soft September schedule. But the victory could prove costly: The Broncos lost three more players to injuries, giving them seven so far.

The Jets (0-3) became the third NFL team to lose a dozen consecutive games in September, joining the 1994-97 Saints and the 2007-10 Rams, who hold the record with 13 consecutive losses in the month.

Yankees sweep, beat Red Sox 6-3 to take AL wild-card lead

BOSTON (AP)—Yankees manager Aaron Boone watched two of his Gold Glove fielders drop easy popups to hand the Red Sox the lead.

Then Boston fumbled a pair of foul balls with Aaron Judge at the plate, twice giving the slugger new life before his two-run double propelled New York to a 6-3 victory on Sunday night and a series sweep that flipped the lead in the AL wild-card race.

"It's a little bit stunning, right? You can't make that stuff up," Boone said. "It's not something you're going to see very often, two popups get dropped by really good defenders. It's part of the ride right now."

After Judge turned a 3-2 deficit into a 4-3 lead, Giancarlo Stanton hit a two-run homer over the Green Monster and out of the ballpark to seal the Yankees' sixth straight win. Stanton, who won Saturday's game with an eighth-inning grand slam, homered in all three games and drove in 10 runs during the series.

Mickey Mantle is the only other Yankee with 10 RBIs in a three-game series versus the Red Sox; Joe DiMaggio is the only other one to homer in each game of a three-game series against them.

"It's a big time right now, so I've just got to make sure I'm the most prepared," Stanton said. "You can't be scared of those moments, or they'll sneak up on you real quick."

The Yankees, who arrived in Boston trailing the Red Sox by two games, leave it with a one-game lead in the race to host the Oct. 5 AL wild-card game. Boston remains in playoff position, one game ahead of Toronto for the second wild-card spot.

"It's not what we wanted coming into the series," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "We didn't get the job done. It's that simple."

After Boston took a 3-2 lead in the seventh on a pair of dropped popups, New York put runners on second and third with one out before Judge hit a foul ball that rookie first baseman Bobby Dalbec short-armed as he approached the Red Sox dugout.

The Red Sox had a second chance to retire Judge when he tipped a 1-2 pitch, but catcher Christian Vázquez couldn't control it. (Vázquez said he lost the ball on the transition into his other hand.)

"I felt like a cat," Judge said. "I felt like I've got nine lives out there."

He then lined the ball to left-center to make it 4-3.

"You can't give that man too many extra chances," Stanton said. "It was just a tremendous at-bat for him to keep pushing, keep fouling pitches off and waiting to get one he could drive into the gap."

New York Yankees' Giancarlo Stanton (27) celebrates his two-run home run with Joey Gallo, right, that also drove in Aaron Judge, center, during the eighth inning of a baseball game, Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021, in Boston. AP

Boone said Judge dislocated his pinky sliding head-first into second base. They were able to pop it back into place and finished the game, the manager said.

"Not too concerned with it," Judge said. "I don't need it to hit, so I think we'll be in good shape."

Chad Green (10-7) earned the win despite blowing a 2-1 lead in the seventh when DJ LeMahieu and Joey Gallo dropped easy popups, allowing the go-ahead run to score. In all, Green allowed two hits in 1 2/3 innings, striking out two.

Aroldis Chapman pitched the ninth to earn his 30th save.

Garrett Richards (7-8) pitched a perfect seventh but walked two and gave up Anthony Rizzo's double in the eighth before Adam Ottavino relieved him and allowed Judge's two-run double.

New York led 2-1 when José Iglesias singled to lead off the seventh and took second on Alex Verdugo's bunt single. Joely Rodríguez's wild pitch moved the runners up, and Vázquez hit a sacrifice fly to tie it.

Green struck out Kiké Hernández, but when pinch-hitter Kyle Schwarber popped up the first pitch he saw in front of the Yankees dugout, LeMahieu flubbed it. Another seemingly easy popup clanged off Gallo's glove in left-center, allowing the run to score.

Brewers 8, Mets 4

In Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Brewers clinched their second NL Central title in four years, beating the sloppy New York Mets 8-4 Sunday behind Willy Adames's two-run homer and three RBIs.

A day after New York was eliminated from postseason contention in their first season under new owner Steven Cohen, the Mets (73-82) lost for the 10th time in 11 games and were assured of a losing season for the fourth time in five years.

Freddy Peralta (10-5) won for the first time since Aug. 10, allowing four runs and five hits in 5 1/3 innings. Carlos Carrasco (1-4) gave up five runs, seven hits and four walks in four innings.

Cardinals 4, Cubs 2

In Chicago, Andrew Knizner scored the go-ahead run on a ninth-inning wild pitch by Codi Heuer (7-5), and St. Louis won its 16th straight for the longest in the majors since Cleveland took 22 in a row in 2017. It the best in the National League since the 1951 New York Giants won 16 straight.

Paul Goldschmidt and Harrison Bader homered to extend a streak that has rocketed the Cardinals into position for the second NL wild card.

Braves 4, Padres 3

In San Diego, Will Smith struck out the side around three walks in the ninth for his 35th save, and Atlanta opened a 2 1/2-game lead over Philadelphia heading into their NL East showdown.

Pinch-hitter Orlando Arcia hit a go-ahead double in the sixth off Pierce Johnson (3-4).

Joc Pederson homered and scored twice for Atlanta, which has led the division since Aug. 15. Atlanta has won seven of nine and hosts the Phillies in a three-game series starting Tuesday.

A.J. Minter (3-7) got the win with one-third of an inning. San Diego, eliminated from postseason contention a day earlier, lost for the 14th time in 17 games and at 78-78 dropped to .500 for the first time since a 10-10 start.

Pirates 6, Phillies 0

In Philadelphia, Starter Hans Crouse (0-1) gave up a home run to Cole Tucker on his first major league pitch and Pittsburgh stopped Philadelphia's five-game winning streak.

Bryce Harper and Philadelphia finished the home portion of their schedule 47-34.

Max Kranick (2-3) combined with Chasen Shreve, David Bednar, Nick Mehars and Chris Stratton to strike out 11 in a six-hitter.

Reds 9, Nationals 2

In Cincinnati, Tyler Stephenson and Nick Castellanos hit consecutive home runs, and Kyle Farmer broke open the game with a grand slam as Cincinnati won its third straight.

Cincinnati is six games back of St. Louis for the second NL wild card with six games left, tied with Philadelphia. At 81-75, the Reds ensured consecutive non-losing seasons for the first time since 2012 and '13.

Tyler Mahle (13-6) allowed one unearned run and three hits in six innings.

Rays 3, Marlins 2

In St. Petersburg, Fla., rookie Shane Baz (2-0) allowed three hits and struck out nine in 5 2/3 scoreless innings to win his second straight start and help the AL East champions to their team-record 14th series sweep.

Nelson Cruz had two RBIs for the Rays,

Rays rookie Wander Franco doubled in the first off Jess Luzardo (5-9) to extend his on-base streak to 41 games. Nick Anderson got his first save this season despite allowing Lewin Daz's leadoff homer in the ninth.

Blue Jays 5, Twins 2

In Minneapolis, Danny Jansen hit a go-ahead, three-run homer off Griffin Jax (3-5 and George Springer also went deep.

Toronto will enter the final week one game back for the second AL wild card.

Alek Manoah (8-2) won his third straight start, giving up two runs and six hits in 5 2/3 innings with eight strikeouts and two walks.

Giants 6, Rockies 2

In Denver, Brandon Crawford homered off Tyler Kinney to cap a four-run ninth and NL West-leading inning San Francisco won for the 15th time in 19 games and maintained a two-game lead. The Giants' 102 wins are the most since 103 in 1993.

Giants first baseman Brandon Belt left the game in the seventh inning after getting hit on the left hand with a pitch while squaring to bunt. Manager Gabe Kapler said X-rays were inconclusive.

Camilo Doval (5-1) pitched the eighth. Daniel Bard (7-8) was the loser.

Dodgers 3, Diamondbacks 0

In Phoenix, Corey Seager hit two solo homers, Julio Uras (19-3) scattered five hits over five innings and World Series champion Los Angeles reached 100 wins for the third time in the last four full seasons.

Seager and Trea Turner both connected in the first inning against Humberto Mejia (0-3) for their 100th home runs as the Dodgers improved to 16-3 against Arizona. Kenley Jansen earned his 36th save.

Arizona fell to 50-106.

Mariners 5, Angels 1

In Anaheim, Calif., Shohei Ohtani allowed Jarred Kelenic's tying home run in the seventh, and Mitch Haniger hit a go-ahead single in a four-run eighth against the bullpen.

Ohtani gave up one run and five hits in seven innings with 10 strikeouts and no walks. He remained 9-2 and lowered his ERA to 3.18. He was 1 for 3 at the plate and is hitting .258 with 98 RBIs and 45 homers.

Seattle has won seven of eight and will enter the final week two games back for the AL's second wild card.

Marco Gonzales (10-5) gave up one run on three hits over seven innings, improving to 7-0 in his last nine starts. Jose Quijada (0-2) was the loser.

White Sox 5, Indians 2

In Cleveland, Lucas Giolito allowed five hits in six scoreless innings, and Eloy Jiménez had a two-run single in the third off Triston McKenzie (5-8).

Harold Ramirez homered off Craig Kimbrel in the eighth, but Liam Hendricks pitched the ninth for his 36th save.

Billy Hamilton was credited with a steal of home in the eighth.

Royals 2, Tigers 1

In Detroit, Kris Bubic (6-6) gave up two hits in seven shutout innings.

Benintendi's RBI single in the first and Nicky Lopez's sacrifice fly in the fourth drove in runs off Wily Peralta (4-4), who entered with 16-inning scoreless streak.

Isaac Paredes had an RBI double in the ninth off Scott Barlow, who stranded the bases loaded when he struck out pinch-hitter Harold Castro for his 16th save.

Rangers 7, Orioles 4

In Baltimore, Andy Ibáñez hit a two-run homer and the Texas Rangers avoided their 100th loss for at least a day by beating the Baltimore Orioles 7-4 Sunday for a four-game split.

Adolis García had two hits and drove in a run for Texas. He set a club rookie record with 256 total bases.

The Rangers finished 24-57 on the road, their lowest winning percentage away from home since they were 22-59 in 1973.

Athletics 2, Astros 1

In Oakland, Calif., Oakland Athletics shortstop Elvis Andrus was put on the 10-day injured list Sunday, a day after breaking his left leg while scoring the winning run against the Houston Astros.

The A's also placed infielder Jed Lowrie on the IL with a sprained right hand.

Andrus singled leading off the bottom of the ninth against Ryan Pressly on Saturday and scored from first when Starling Marte lined a double into the gap in right-center. Andrus stumbled rounding third and barely made it to home plate.

The Athletics' 2-1 win kept them in the AL wild-card race.

Mini Games to include events for para athletes

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 will offer events for para athletes and the Mini Games organizing committee hopes para athletes from Micronesia, including the CNMI, will come out and compete.

Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022 Organizing Committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta said the para events will run concurrently with the Mini Games from June 17 to 25, 2022.

"We're looking forward for our local para athletes to join and hopefully we will have some athletes from the rest of Micronesia as well. This is an opportunity for them to compete in para events. In the past most [of the competitors are from the South Pacific] so having para athletes from Micronesia will be exciting," he said.

So far, the para events offered in next year's Mini Games will be men's and women's shot put (ambulant and seated), men's and women's javelin, and 100m (ambulant). In addition, for the very first time, there is a possibility that there will be either a 400m or 800m wheelchair race offered for men's and women's. The Pacific Games Council will finalize a decision on this event at their November assembly.

Oceania Athletics Association secretary general Robin Sapong said events for para athletes is actually part of the chartered events of the Pacific Games Council under athletics.

"Although para events are under the International Paralympic Committee, as one of the sports federations to deliver the games, we are working closely with the NMI Pacific Mini Games CEO and the local organizing committee on securing implements and also access to and from the playing field for our para athletes," he said.

Sapong said para athletics being part of the Mini Games gives the CNMI the opportunity to promote diversity and inclusion in sports.

"As the host we need to ensure we consider the safety and welfare of the para athletes as they have different classification. We plan to set up guidelines based on current IPC standards on procedures for the assessment of athletes and the allocation of classification. We are very excited to be the first sport federation to host para events in our region. Of course we will need the support from our community, partners, and stakeholder to deliver these events."

Yvonne Mullins, OAA executive director and technical delegate for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games, said she's very excited to be able to help deliver para events at next year's Mini Games.

"We have never been in a position to offer para events at our previous Championships or Games held on Saipan and we looking forward to highlighting these events. We are hoping that we can include the wheelchair track event which will give more para athletes the opportunity to compete. The CNMI has not previously entered any para athletes at the Pacific Games, so this will be a first for the host island-nation, an opportunity they cannot afford to take advantage of," she said.

Mullins added that para events have grown in popularity at the last two Pacific Games in Papua New Guinea and Samoa and it expected that as time goes by they will become more popular.

"OAA is actively encouraging more events at their Championships and will look for opportunities to ensure that all para athletes are able to be classified according to their ability prior to the Games. With preparations well underway for the track and field facility to be upgraded in time for the Games, the local Organizing committee has already been in discussions with OAA to ensure the facility is purpose-fit for para athletics events," she said.

THE ONE

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Titu Ahmed. Bangladesh FC was then held to just two PK when its last two shooters—Harun Morol and Kamrul Kamrul faltered.

In three consolation matches, Bangladesh Youth, the NMI Women's National Team, and Matansa won against their respective opponents.

In the battle for third place, Bangladesh Youth downed Saipan United, 2-0, behind the goals of Mohammad Shariff Uddin and Shakib Shakib.

In the race for the fifth place honors, the NMI WNT won over Shirley's FC in a penalty shootout, 5-4, while Matansa took the seventh place after a victory via forfeit against Island Star.

Meanwhile, last Thursday's match in the MSL between TanHoldings Football Club and Kanoa Football Club was rescheduled to Oct. 7, while results in Sunday's games in the division will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*'s Wednesday issue.

Isaiah, Aoi finish first in 1,500m anew

By MARK RABAGO
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From right, Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Isaiah Aleksenko, Kean Pajarillaga, and Kouki Watanabe finished 1-2-3 in the 1,500m race of Saipan Swim Club's Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series held last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe. MARK RABAGO

From left, Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Aoi Braxton, Julia Jinang and Ayumi Obligacion finished 1-2-3 in the 1,500m race of Saipan Swim Club's Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series held last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe. MARK RABAGO

Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Isaiah Aleksenko and Aoi Braxton finished first in the longest race of Saipan Swim Club's Triple Crown Open Water Swim Series held last Saturday, Sept. 25, in the waters off Civic Center Beach in Susupe.

Aleksenko topped the men's division of the 1,500m swim with a sterling time of 19:25.92. He was followed by teammates Kean Pajarillaga and Kouki Watanabe, who came in at 20:47.85 and 21:39.80, respectively.

The 15-year-old Marianas High School student said he's glad to not only finish first in the longest race of the day, but also to experience competing again after months of no meets.

"I'm really happy that I got to participate in the Triple Crown swimming event. I had a lot of fun and really enjoyed Saturday's competition. I'm very grateful that I had such wonderful and supportive swimmates, and I hope we can do something like this in the future again. My next target is to beat my time, and to participate in this swim event again," he said.

Pajarillaga is pretty happy finishing second place in the race.

"My teammates in this race were Isaiah and Kouki. I feel like I could've done better, so I plan on practicing more in order to become faster and improve. I hope that there will be more opportunities for me to compete in any type of swimming competition, so that I have a better chance at getting better results. I think that I did pretty well but my goal next time is get a better time."

Watanabe, for his part, said coming in third place is already an accomplishment for him.

"This final Triple Crown race was a victory for me because I managed to get third place even though it was the first 1,500m in a long time. I was a little nervous because I was swimming 1,000m for the first two races, but my teammates cheered me on to the end that led me to third place. For my next goal I will be aiming for at least second place. This race was just a warmup for the next one!"

Braxton was the first woman to cross the finish line in the 1,500m, submitting a time of 23:07.32. She was followed by fellow Tsunami Saipan members Julia Jinang and Ayumi Obligacion, who registered swims of 23:18.10 and 25:53.91, respectively.

"The last Triple Crown race was challenging. I'm glad I dropped my time 15 seconds on the 1.5K. I'm also happy for my teammates and I'm proud that they all did their best," said Braxton.

Jinang, for her part, said the results of the third and final race tied the Triple Crown event altogether with a bow.

"I believe that my swimmates and I have done their best and received the awards that they deserve. I am seeing great progress in my team, especially Aoi Braxton and Ayumi Obligacion, who swam 1.5 kilometers with me. This was a great competitive event to start off with after a while of no official races. Each day of practice helps me reach my long-term goal of getting the best times, learning the best techniques, and constantly improving," she said.

Obligacion said she's thankful for everyone who made the Triple Crown series possible.

"I would like to congratulate all participants of the Final Triple Crown Race that held last Saturday and all parents that helped us to make this race happen. This race was mostly meant for the Abu Dhabi representatives of Saipan, but besides that I think everyone did a great job that day. I would like to wish them all the best of luck at Abu Dhabi and hope there is more swim meets to come in the future," she said.

Results of the 1,000m, 500m, 100m, 50m, and 25m open water races will be published in next issues of the *Saipan Tribune.*

ANTONETTE

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bausa's feat competing in the over 109kg category before settling for silver. He had a snatch of 110kg (242lbs), clean and jerk of 145kg (319lbs) for a total of 255kg (561lbs) earning him second place in his weight division.

He said the 2021 Oceania Senior Weightlifting Championships is part of his training for next year's Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games the islands will host for the first time ever.

"We've been training for the Mini Games next year. This was just a stepping stone in the overall plan," he said.

Asked how strange it was to compete virtually, Barnhouse admits that it takes some of the excitement out of competition.

"There's a lot less adrenaline when competing virtually. I like it better in person."

CNMI Weightlifting Federation president John Davis congratulated Labausa and Barnhouse for bringing home medals. He also thanked Barnhouse, Greg Borja, and Emmanuel Aquino for helping the organization stage the virtual competition.

"To the best of my knowledge this is the first time our weightlifting athletes have competed at this level. I'm extremely proud of them and their success. Due to COVID-19, participation in sports in the Pacific region at the international level has been slow or not at all. The Oceania Weightlifting Federation took a somewhat unique approach to keep athletes competitive by hosting the 2021 Oceania Senior Weightlifting Championships via live internet with the small CNMI contingent competing against the rest of Oceania via internet at the Ada Gym weight room at the Oleai Sports Complex," he said.

NMIBF

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grams for NMI basketball.

"We worked on identifying what the NMIBF board members and officials' roles are by establishing committees. That way, we share the load and can focus on the responsibilities assigned to us and have direction and action plan toward that goal," Lee said.

The federation head also mentioned the challenges NMIBF faced and is still facing right now, including funding issues and restrictions being implemented as safety measures against the COVID-19 pandemic. At the presentation, Lee highlighted the partnership that NMIBF was able to reestablish with the stakeholders in the sport—private and public companies and individuals, fellow sports federation, CNMI Public School System, FIBA Oceania, and basketball clubs/teams and their officials.

"Without these partners, we will not be able to move forward with our programs and re-engage players and teams to get back into the game after being inactive for months due to the COVID-19 pandemic," Lee said.

Through its supporters, NMIBF was able to organize a tryout for the NMI National Program where the islands' representatives from the Micronesian Games 2022 will come from. The federation also teamed up with the Tan Siu Lin Foundation and held a summer camp, partnered with Northern Marianas Athletics and private companies for a fundraiser, and is currently running an interscholastic league through the assistance of IT&E and the CNMI PSS. There are a couple more programs in the pipeline, including a village outreach program and tournaments for clubs.

"There's a lot of work ahead of us and through our continued partnership with the sport's stakeholders here and off-island, we will be able to accomplish them to strengthen our different programs and provide opportunities for our players, coaches, and officials," Lee said.

The NMI is one of the only two FIBA Oceania members (Fiji was the other one) invited to address the assembly and talk about empowering national federations.

"On behalf of Burton Shipley, president of FIBA's Oceania region, we would like to thank Mr. James Lee for presenting to the Oceania Zone Assembly. James and all of you at NMIBF have done a fantastic job setting the federation's foundations over the last few months and we are pleased to be able to share this journey with the rest of the national federations. NMIBF have set a plan, and are now delivering to this plan and we are excited to work alongside the board in order to see these programs come to life in the country. We hope that more federations have been inspired by the story of NMIBF and can take a page from your book in terms of setting and delivering to a plan. Congratulations and we look forward to working with the federation on future projects," Jenkins said. ***(PR)***

Tucker's 66-yarder sets record, gives Ravens win at Detroit PAGE 17

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Labausa

Barnhouse

Antonette, David medal in Oceania Championships

By MARK RABAGO
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Antonette Labausa won a gold medal and David Barnhouse settled for silver in the 2021 Oceania Senior Weightlifting Championships held virtually over the weekend.

The CNMI National Weightlifting Team coaches competed live via internet in the International Weightlifting Federation-sanctioned event along with a small delegation of CNMI weightlifters at the weight room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Labausa competed in the 81-kilogram category last Saturday. Her best snatch was 66kg (145.2lbs); her best clean and jerk was 91kg (200.2lbs) for a total of 157kg (345.4lbs) which was good enough for first place and a gold medal.

"Although this was not my best performance, I am happy to have won gold. The ultimate goal for me is to perform as best as I can at the Mini Games next year. As well as the Micronesian Games that follows right after," Labausa told *Saipan Tribune* in a social media message.

She said competing virtually was new to her, but did acknowledge that COVID-19 has made it difficult to compete like everyone acustomed to.

"I'm usually not a fan of virtual competitions because so many technical errors can happen during your lifts but I'm still grateful to be able to compete in some way during the pandemic."

She thanked the CNMI Weightlifting Federation and her partner, Devine Pua, for helping her to strike gold in the 2021 Oceania Senior Weightlifting Championships.

Labausa is also grateful that she was able to return to form after taking a respite from training.

"I took a small break after the Marianas Cup at the end of March and came back to training mid-April. So we have been training for a few months and unfortunately I have had some injuries re-surface during those few months."

Barnhouse nearly duplicated La-

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FIBA Oceania senior manager Amanda Jenkins introduces the Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation to the attendees of the virtual FIBA Oceania Mid-Term Congress for 2019-2023 Cycle held last Sept. 18. SCREEN GRAB

NMIBF shares journey at FIBA Oceania Mid Congress

The Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation was featured in a presentation on empowering national federations during the FIBA Oceania Mid-Term Congress for 2019-2023 Cycle.

NMIBF president James Lee shared the NMBIF's journey since its new board was formed in April this year to representatives of the 22-member FIBA Oceania family in the virtual assembly held last Sept. 18. FIBA Oceania senior manager Amanda Jenkins facilitated the congress, which was also attended by FIBA Oceania president Burton Shipley of New Zealand and World Association of Basketball Coaches president and FIBA Technical Commission chair Patrick Hunt of Australia.

Lee discussed how NMIBF first had to strengthen its organizational structure before mapping out plans and pro-

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The One FC players, seen here celebrating after their semis win over Bangladesh Youth, also prevailed over Bangadesh FC in the finals of the Marianas Soccer League 2 Summer Season last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The One FC tops MSL2

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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The One FC delivered in the penalty shootout anew to beat Bangladesh FC, 3-2, in the finals of the Marianas Soccer League 2 Summer Season last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Scott Kim, Ming Guang Xu, and Don Cabrera made their PK to hand The One FC the title win and complete the team's strong run in the playoffs. The One FC was the third seeded squad in the playoffs and pulled off an upset over No. 2 Bangladesh Youth, also in the shootout (3-2), to reach the finals against No. 4 Bangladesh FC.

In the one-game finale, Bangladesh FC, which stunned No. 1 seed Saipan United in the other semis match, 3-0, and The One FC engaged in a scoreless draw in regulation, bringing the championship duel into the PK shootout.

Kim and Xu made the first two attempts for The One FC and hit their targets, while Cabrera's conversion came after the back-to-back misses from Ri Cheng Zian and Boaz Soo Hyun Lim. Kim, Xu, and Cabrera were the same three players that saved The One FC in its semis match over Bangladesh Youth.

Bangladesh FC, on the other hand, had Md. Sohel Akanda drilling his PK and third shooter Abdul Luylu Shahanewaz doing the same after a muffed attempt from Md.

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